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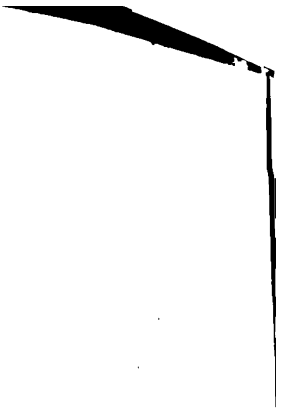

MOTHERHOOD;

OR,

CONFERENCES

FOR

Our Lady's and St. Philip's Girls.

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BY THE

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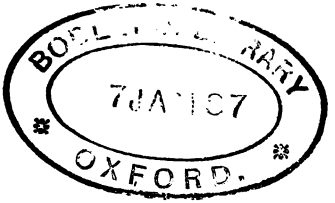
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APPROBATION.

We have read the following Conferences on the dignity of the married state and of motherhood, and approve of them for the use of the faithful of our diocese. We think the instruction and advice they contain likely to be most useful to the young women to whom they are addressed.

✠ EDWARD, Bishop of Nottingham.

August 20th, 1885.

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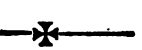
TO OUR LADY'S AND ST. PHILIP'S GIRLS.



It seems to me, dear children, quite time that I told you more fully the object of your meeting together here under our Lady's maternal roof, what you are wanted to do, what you are wanted to be, and, in fact, explain clearly and explicitly the nature of the confraternity to which you belong. Many things have hitherto hindered the proper development of your confraternity, and its being carried out in a systematic manner, with fixed rules, &c. There is no need here to enter particularly into those various causes of delay, but I may say that it has been owing to the necessity of getting you together before a beginning could be made, and then the hindrance caused by the alterations in the convent, and the ab-

sence of some of the sisters, and the illness of others.

Confraternities have various ends in view; there are confraternities of prayer, confraternities to promote some special devotions, confraternities to do certain works, and so forth. Now ours is not a confraternity of prayer; it is not to promote any particular devotion, nor certain charitable works. What, then, is its object? It is told in few words. The object of our Confraternity is to make good, holy, useful women. Its aim is, whilst girls are girls, uncertain as yet what their future path in life will be, to show them the greatness of woman's dignity, her power to do good in the world, her power to do evil; to make the thoughtless think, and think seriously, what a woman should be; to make them understand the beauty of a good woman in God's sight, and in the sight of His holy angels and saints.

There are women now in heaven, who are as pleasing in the sight of God as even the beautiful angels are; and not

only the St. Teresas, St. Gertrudes, and St. Catherines, but a multitude besides, "who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth."

Now, in wishing our dear Mother's children to be good women, I am not wishing to see them, like some good women we know, generally dressed in black, of whom, in most churches, there are one or more examples. There are good women who spend their time in prayer, such as it is, waste the priest's time in talk, make themselves, at home and abroad, peculiar and disagreeable, and make those around them peculiarly uncomfortable. I have heard a priest, inclined to be witty, speak of this torment of priests, the pious good "lady in black," who, he said, was usually to be found in every church to try the patience of priests; "but," he added, "God is good to me, for He only permits one such, if there were more than one, I could not bear it." Now, in wishing our girls to be pious and good, I certainly do not want to see them eccentric; I want to see them simple,

good women; I want to see those whom God wills for that state of life, noble, unselfish mothers, gentle, kind, useful wives. Now, it is possible to be good, and because of a certain lack of usefulness and knowledge, to do almost as much harm as a bad person would. There are many good girls who, when they marry, have very unhappy homes, from want of knowledge of useful things. It seems a strange thing indeed that very often bad women are more clever than good ones. Now this should not be. We should strive to be perfect in word and work, that we may be pleasing in the sight of the All-Holy, All-Perfect God. We do certainly desire to please that dear good God Who made us. We feel so grateful when we think how He loves us, when we believe, because faith teaches it, though it seems such a difficult thing to believe, that weak, worthless, wicked as we are, or may be have been, God loves us. When our love changes, as it often does, His does not change. He loved us first, "unlovely that we were,"

and He loves us ever. We will not spurn this love; we will strive to be what this loving God wants us to be. One thing we know, we know that He wants us to be perfect. We may not know yet in what state of life He wishes us to be, but this we do know, that whatever state of life He intends us for, He wishes us to be perfect in it. To be perfect, we must do God's Will. That is the perfection of perfections, if we may use such an expression. To know God's Will, then, regarding their future state of life, must every day be the object of the prayers of our Lady's and St. Philip's girls, and then that state of life must be prepared for. The state of life intended by God for most of you will probably be the married state. God has sent you into the world to be wives and mothers; this, then, is what the greater number of you have to prepare for, and you have to look forward to it in a calm, serious manner; not in a giddy flighty way. Our Lady's girls are not to be vain, frivolous girls; they are to strive with

all their might to be good and true women. They are not to look forward to being married from motives of vanity, or, like many others, bitterly will they rue it afterwards. Our Lady's and St. Philip's girls are to look forward to being married, in order to do the Will of God, and because for this they were created; because God intended them for this end. The thought that marriage is a Sacrament, and that those whom God intends for this state, He will Himself, in His own good time, provide with the partner and means of embracing it, will hinder all levity and flirting with men.

Now, in speaking so much about this state of life, I am not forgetting those whom God intends for another state; those whom He wishes to be united specially to Himself, who are set apart for Himself, who are to be consecrated to Him. Those who, indeed, are called to the higher state, who have chosen the better part, I shall speak to another time. As the majority of you will, please God, be happy

wives and mothers, and as this is the state intended by Him for most of you, I speak about it first, and the object of this first conference, the thought I wish you to carry away from it, is, that it is your duty to pray, that you may know God's Will regarding your future state of life, and that you have come here to be trained for it, to be prepared for it, and to be tided safely over the intermediate dangerous time, for the years that intervene between girlhood and womanhood are indeed dangerous. Many are the good innocent girls who have suffered shipwreck in them, who from giddiness, perhaps, more than wickedness, have lost what every woman prizes,—her honour, that which, in the eyes of the world, corrupted as it is, and lowered in its standard of virtue, can never be recovered. May God preserve our Lady's girls from losing their virtue, and may He inspire them with the resolution to take the proper care to preserve it.

Now perhaps this may seem to you rather dry reading, and make you think

you are not come here for amusement, but this would be a great mistake. I do want you to thoroughly enjoy yourselves when you come to Our Lady's Home, but, at the same time, I want you to think a little more, and to know a little more each time you come, and to go away more and more resolved to be good, true, holy, virtuous women. I do not want you to be sad or sorrowful, I want you all to be bright and happy. If you try to live as you think God wishes you should, you will be sure to be happy. I repeat, if you are as God wishes you, you will be sure to be happy, for He wishes you to be happy, He made you to be happy.

Resolve this Christmas and coming new year, to commence anew, and to let the one end and aim of your life be to do the Will of the good God, Who made you, and loves you with such an intense love; and that you may keep this resolution, will be the prayer of the sisters, who love their girls so much, because God loves them so much.

We sometimes love to strive, in our

poor puny way, to look into the mind of God. Oh, such beautiful thoughts come to us then, thoughts that we could not write. We love to think of all the beautiful conceptions in God's mind that we see in creation, knowing all the while there are beautiful conceptions that never have been created, or that we have never seen created; but one thing we have seen, one idea we have viewed, but viewed in a fallen state, and that is God's beautiful conception of a mother. Yes, a mother. What, or who is a mother? A mother is one who adumbrates the office of God. God is our Mother; God brought us forth. A mother indeed only shadows forth God's office. She does not create her children; she is the medium God uses.

Ah, dear children, my dear girls, how can I bring before your minds forcibly enough the dignity to which you are raised, the high vocation to which you are called, in being called to become mothers. It needs an angel's mind to penetrate into God's, and see this beau-

tiful work He conceived in His Almighty Mind. Indeed, we have fallen from what God intended we should be; all God's good creation is changed; there is a blight, a mark, a stain over all: sin has penetrated everywhere. Sin has penetrated into the hearts of mothers, and those hearts, infected with sin, influence and infect their children. It is too true, we all know it, we all see it, we all feel it. What a fearful thing for sin to do, to spoil what should be so beautiful, so great a work of God, a mother. But what shall we do? Shall we grow downhearted? Shall we throw down our arms in despair, saying it is useless striving to be what God wishes us to be, what God intended we should be? Ah, no, surely not. We must not forget there is a regeneration, a new creation, and that we can still be what God wishes us to be. Jesus has come on earth to give us His Precious Blood, and thus to recreate us, to purify us. He has restored the dignity of woman. He has made up for the fallen mothers in the person

of His own sweet Mother. "He came to make all things new." Let us, then, be renewed in spirit, and, dear girls, little as you are, and poor and weak as you are, promise, by the grace of God, to raise the standard of motherhood, and realize, as near as possible, the idea of the Mother in the Divine Mind. What a work would you not do; your influence, your example, your children, will affect others around you, and if the mothers did but do their duty, soon would the world change. Then what should a mother be, you will naturally ask, to exemplify the idea in God's mind, to be according to His pattern? First, a mother should be pure, spotless, free from sin; the words sin and mother agree not together.

As we look at the beautiful office of a mother, as we see the work she is called upon to do, sin seems worse in her than in any other creature of God. She is to make children of God; she is to be like God, fruitful. Ah, me! what a sad thought, that sin ever came near this beautiful being, a mother. But it

has come, and we feel its effects within us; yet be not downhearted, be not discouraged; you can be made white and pure in Jesu's Precious Blood. Let this, then, be a resolution you will make and keep to. You will keep your souls pure and free from sin. Every good girl before her marriage goes to confession; but she very often after delays a long time before she goes again, thus she allows sin to remain upon her soul, sin that afterwards shows itself in her children. Now, make a firm resolution when entering the marriage state, when receiving the grand sacrament which brings with it, not grace for that time alone, but a continuity of graces to the end of your life, that bears fruit year after year,—make your resolution that, to receive the plenitude of grace, to prepare yourself to be and to keep yourself a holy and devoted mother after God's own heart, you will go regularly to the sacraments, and that you will allow nothing to interfere with this rule that you have laid down. Thus you will keep your souls pure, thus lay

the foundation of a good mother. This is the all-important point. You must have the grace of God in you, for without it you can do nothing. This is the very root, both of the future goodness of your children, and of your own sanctity of soul. There must be no excuse about so many distractions, so much to think of, as the years run on and bring you more and more anxieties. Do you keep strictly to your rule, and leave your confessor to judge about your distractions and many anxieties. He will not give you the sacrament if you are not in a fit state to receive it. He is the judge, not you. Such anxiety is an artful craft of the evil one, with which he deceives too many, and leads them even into grievous sin, by urging them to neglect the sacraments, on the plea that they are not fit to receive them. You think, because the quiet life of some of you is changed, you are not fit to go to communion. Certainly the bustle of the world is very different to the quiet convent schools in which some of you have lived so happily for years.

But you have more need of the grace of the sacraments now, when you are more exposed to temptation, and you have still more need when you become a mother, when you have such arduous duties to perform. Now this resolution you must offer to God, as you give your hand to the one whom God gives you to be your protector through life, and this will be a bond of union between yourself and God.

So much, then, for the first point of what a mother should be, and what she should possess. She should be pure and holy; she should keep her soul free from sin. We have spoken of various other points on different occasions, of the unseen influence, as well as the seen influence, a mother exercises over her children; of the energy she needs to combat with their temptations; of the necessity of herself doing all she wishes her children to do, or her words will have little weight with them. Many, many more things there are to be said on the necessity of constant recurrence to God in her many necessities, of her need of

possessing God's Holy Spirit, of her living by it, if she would have her children live by it. But sufficient has been said for this first volume, which is to precede some others, which we shall write for you, that you may read them in your own homes when you may be hindered coming out to our little meetings by your domestic duties. You will think of the gatherings of your girlhood then, and it will be a happy thought for you to think that there are hearts devoted to and praying for you, and begging God's blessing for you and yours.

SISTER MARY.

RULES

FOR

Our Lady's and St. Philip's Girls.

At present they will meet twice a week. [In the future, we hope to have a room set apart for them to meet in every night from seven till nine.]

On Wednesday evening they may assemble any time after seven to chat together. A sister will come to them at eight. At half-past eight, reading; then to the church,—prayers for the dying, and a hymn.

On Saturday, instruction in writing, reading, needlework, household duties, &c. A book read during the needlework.

Assemble at three.

On Sunday at three, instruction in the church.

If at any time the girls wish for advice, or are in any trouble, they may come to the convent, and their mother will see them, if able.

THE

OBJECT OF THE CONFRATERNITY,

IS TO MAKE GOOD TRUE WOMEN. — THE MAJORITY OF WOMEN WERE CREATED BY GOD TO BE GOOD WIVES AND MOTHERS.

To my dear sisters in religion, of all orders, who have young girls under their care, as well as to those young girls themselves, we offer this little work, which, though written specially for our own, we think will be useful to many other confraternities. It is a remark so often made that no one will be offended at our repeating it: "Why do the girls brought up with such care by religious, so often turn out so badly when they go into the world?" Priests constantly say this. I do not say they throw the blame on the poor nuns, but they cannot understand how it is. The sisters themselves remark the fact with sorrow. I have known those whose one great work it is to bring up young girls, say: "Why is it so many turn out badly, with all the

care taken of them, the instructions, the teaching, the shielding from all harm and knowledge of evil?" Ah, but there it is; perhaps that is the very root of the matter.

The system adopted with young girls who have good homes, and who, when they leave the shelter of the convent roof, will be sheltered in their own homes from many dangers the poorer classes are exposed to, may not be so beneficial to the poor. The system of education which has such admirable results in the one case, as we may witness by the goodness of our Catholic aristocracy, mostly brought up by religious, does not seem to have the same effect with girls of a lower order. Shall we be forgiven for saying that there appears to us to be a great evil in the bringing up of girls—perhaps convent girls especially—and that is, that they do not appear to be brought up for the life the majority will have to lead? If God has intended woman for a certain purpose, her education must be such as shall fit her for the designs of God. She

should be taught to look forward to it, rather than have the thought shut out from her. How much to blame are many mothers upon this point. A girl is, as a rule, destined by God to be a wife and mother, and how little is she instructed upon her duties before she enters upon this state.

Now, with young girls brought up in convents the evils which accrue from this almost entire ignoring that there is such a state as matrimony are manifold. One is, that when a young girl leaves the quiet convent home, and is suddenly thrown into an entirely new sphere of life, she is in a state of entire simplicity as regards the dangers to which she is exposed, in complete ignorance of the many evils she will encounter, and is likely to fall into, unless she is wary and on her guard. When that poor girl has fallen into sin and shame, and her eyes are opened by bitter experience, then she will lament in vain that she had not been warned in time of the dangers to which she would be exposed. Of course she knows that she fell

through her own fault, her own folly, her own vanity. Some may not be aware even that there was any defect in the way they were brought up; they may despairingly blame others for their sin, but not be able themselves to see that the mistaken way in which they were educated was one great cause of their fall.

There are many girls who steer themselves safely through the rocks that beset the innocence of their sex, and who land safely, but far too suddenly, on the shores of matrimony, and who bring an amount of misery, not only upon themselves, but upon the world in general, by their ignorance of their duties as wives and mothers. They bring children into the world without knowing their duty to them as regards either body or soul. They drive their husbands into bad habits, and to staying out late at night, by their gossiping, by their want of management, their little knowledge of household matters, their disorder, and by their little endeavour to please their husbands, and

to make them happy and comfortable at home. They had not been taught to love home duties, to regard them as something sacred, to look upon them in a religious aspect.

You have all seen, dear sisters, the change in so short a time in more than one of your young girls, after a year or two of married life. Why is it? I ask again. Why should this be so? The sacrament of matrimony should work a change for the better, not for the worse, in those who receive it. What is of God's ordaining, God's Will, certainly will not retard a soul, certainly will not damage it. The state of life ordained by God for a soul will strengthen it, increase its grace and perfection; necessarily it must be so. Then why is it that it does not do so? We have shown in these conferences some of the reasons for this sad state of things. We have shown that it is the fault of those who enter this state from self-will, vanity, and so forth. We have shown some of the faults and mistakes in the young girls themselves,

but we do ask those who have care of our future women, to examine and see if there are not some mistakes in their mode of bringing them up, in the way in which they train them for their future office. Are they trained at all as we train a person for a certain trade or profession? Look at that grand soul, Sister Mary of St. Philip, and the work she is doing in the world, by her able training of young girls for their future position, for their future life as governesses. Look at the admirable results of her training; year after year she has laboured at her work, and is well repaid. She considers all that can fit them for their future state of life, and make them good practical women; and well do the greater number fulfil her wishes. Most carefully is everything considered and called into requisition that can help to fit them for their future career; just as in the world, those who are studying for a certain profession or office, study diligently, and are most carefully prepared.

We again beg for forgiveness; we

should indeed be sorry to hurt the feelings of any one, when we say that there are certain defects in some, we do not say all, who have the care of young girls. We know full well how many noble religious there are working as the one above mentioned is doing, with the light of God's Spirit within them, and are doing vast good with our young girls; but if we are to believe the testimony of priests and other wise and good people, there is some great mistake in the way in which very many of our poor girls are brought up. We might indeed be guilty of presumption, if we put forth merely our own thoughts on this subject. In nothing we have ever written have we felt more difficulty than in this. Our love for our heavenly Mother's sex, our desire to see our girls good, noble women, and bringing into the world, and bringing up good children, must be our excuse if we should pain any one who reads these pages. We could say very much more. We could use the words of priests, but we refrain, trusting that those

who may read this, may make a special prayer to find out any mistakes they may have made in the past, and, if need be, may commence a new system with those under their care. The Mother above all mothers will help them to correct whatever mistakes there may have been in the past. She will show them that to bring up girls in ignorance of their duties, their office as women, is not to bring them up in innocence. Ignorance is not innocence, as it is too often thought to be. Our Mother's conversation with the Angel Gabriel, at the age of fifteen, shows us that though so innocent, she was not ignorant. Her example, her almost life-long example, shows us the value God sets upon domestic life. Her early years were spent, as those of many of our young girls are, in seclusion from the world. She lived several years in the temple, as our young girls live for some years under the care of religious. Would that when they went forth into the world they imitated their Mother's example. Would that they

were something like her in their poor homes, and imitated her in their daily work. Would that they looked upon their daily duties in the sacred light that the ever Blessed Virgin, our own dear Mother Mary, did hers. We cannot, we think, do better than finish this preface to the little work here offered to our sisters, and those under their charge, by copying again that beautiful extract we quoted in another work,* and then leave this little book to the care of the Guardian Angels, to bring it to those to whom it will be of service, and whisper to them thoughts that will work far more good than our words can, even though they are united with our heart's best prayer for the good of those around us, those whom we love and pray for with more than our own poor heart; those whom we love and pray for in union with the burning heart of love of our heavenly Mother.

* Spiritual Exercises of Mary.

CONFERENCES

FOR

OUR LADY'S AND ST. PHILIP'S GIRLS.

CONFERENCE I.

UPON FAMILIARITY WITH MEN.

There is one matter, most important, that I must speak of, dear girls, and that is regarding improper and indiscreet familiarities. Regarding any one to whom you are not engaged, you know well, and I need not tell you, that it would be most certainly wrong to permit anything of the kind; but regarding the one to whom you are engaged, you still have to be most careful not to permit any improper or dangerous familiarity with him; if you wish to preserve his regard and his respect

for you, be most careful upon this point, unless you are he will perhaps even think worse of you than you deserve. You may perhaps permit, in all simplicity and ignorance of ill, what he will think is permitted with a bad intention, and he will think lightly of you. He will think that what he has heard or read in coarse books is true, that all women are alike, and that there is no such thing as an innocently minded woman.

Would that we could raise the tone of thought in men's minds; would that men had just reason for believing women to be what in fact they ought to be—their guardian angels.

The woman, as a rule, leads a quieter life than the man, and though indeed she has many harassing cares in her domestic life, and in the bringing up of her children, she is not so mixed up with the world as the man; he is more distracted by business and worldly affairs, and thus is not so capable of thinking of spiritual things, and applying his mind to God, as she is in her quiet, peaceful, domestic life. He will

probably see and feel that she is greatly his superior in all that concerns a spiritual and a Christian life; he will respect her for it, and great will be her power with him for good, if she acts with prudence and zeal, always remembering that the good will be done by silent influence, gentle manners, and example, more than by words.

But we have spoken elsewhere of the beauty of domestic life; though we could linger long on this theme, it is not our present topic, but if you would have happy, peaceful homes, dear girls, be very prudent and very discreet in your conduct with him to whom you are engaged, or you will be very likely to lose his respect, and after marriage, perhaps in a moment of anger, or as a sort of excuse for his own misconduct, he will reproach or taunt you; and then, when your children see that their father does not respect their mother, they too will lose their respect for her, and, instead of the sweet and peaceful home, resembling the holy house of Nazareth, there will be another of those

wretched homes of which we already see so many; homes where the devil has a home, where that evil, abominable spirit, whom it would be thought all would detest and avoid, is protected and obeyed; where children are brought into the world and bred up under the influence of Satan, instead of learning from their early infancy to know and love the good God Who made them, and, under the influence of good example, growing in grace and becoming most dear children of God. How sad, how shocking is this. Do, dear girls, from the time you have made up your minds to marry, to become wives, and, if God so wills, mothers, from that moment resolve that you will be true wives, good mothers.

When you are engaged to one whom you think God intends for you, be most careful to give him good example; men expect this from women if they are good men. You have the power of either spoiling them or strengthening their virtue. It is a real blessing to a young man to be engaged to a good

and pious girl. She can keep him from all kinds of dangers during that time in which young men are supposed, in the language of the world, to be "sowing their wild oats." She may save him, if she will, from marring his character and ruining himself, and this particularly, as we have said, by never allowing any wrong familiarity with herself. If through vanity, passion, or any other bad motive, she allows this, she may do an irreparable injury to one whom she really loves, and to whom she is engaged. She may be sure that the devil will make the most of the evil she has caused, unintentionally and in her foolish fondness though it be, and that his bad behaviour will be exhibited to others besides herself, and thus she will be making a miserable future for herself when she has become his wife.

As we have already said, in any case the girl loses little by little her self-respect, and the respect of her lover; so take this warning to heart, dear girls; resolve that you will be truly noble women, and make use of the

means that will enable you to become so; use every means of grace; accustom yourselves to repeat constantly some one or more of those little indulgenced ejaculatory prayers, which, as a holy writer says, go straight to the Heart of God. Go regularly to the Sacraments, and induce him to whom you are engaged to frequent them with you. In holy Communion Jesus will bless you with a special blessing, to enable you to love one another better, and to enter the state of matrimony with the dispositions which will make your marriage most pleasing to Him. Do not think that you are taking a step lower by being married; on the contrary, if it *is* your vocation you are rising higher in the path of Christian virtue, provided you enter the marriage state from a pure motive, and this is indeed what you must earnestly pray for and desire, even though your motives at first in becoming engaged were not so good as Jesus would wish them to have been. If it was simply from self-love or vanity that you became

engaged, it is not too late to remedy that. Turn now to our Blessed Lady, turn to St. Joseph, beg of them, by their holy union, entered into purely from love of God and desire to fulfil His Will, beg of them, I say, to assist you and give you the fitting dispositions, that you may walk in their footsteps. Choose them as your patrons and protectors. They will watch over you both, and preserve you from undue familiarity with one another, and when your marriage takes place your spouse will value you the more because of your proper womanly reserve before marriage. As we have already said more than once, you will be more respected, and there is no love without respect, or rather no lasting love, for where respect is wanting love is fleeting and evanescent. Practise, then, a maidenly dignity and reserve, and then when you have really given yourself to the one you have chosen, he will prize you far more. Say a special prayer every day to St. Joseph for him to whom you are engaged, and offer your next Commu-

nion in honour of St. Joseph for the same intention. He is most powerful; he will assist you both in your temporal and spiritual affairs. If you make your engagement pleasing to him, by striving to make it in some way resemble his own to our Blessed Lady, he will show you his patronage in some marked way, perhaps by some unexpected assistance in your temporal affairs; having had charge of the temporal affairs of the Holy Family, he has great power in helping other families; but if you displease him by permitting anything unbecoming or unfitting, by making your engagement as unlike his as can be, he will not favour it, he will not patronize or encourage it; so be careful what you do; do not lose such a powerful patron. Mortify yourself; keep yourself to yourself. Pray to your guardian angel and the guardian angel of the one to whom you are engaged to protect you; and when the day arrives for you to fulfil your engagement, and to plight your troth before Holy Church to the one to whom henceforth you are to be as

dear as his own life, then your wedding will indeed be happy. Jesus, Mary and Joseph will be there, and the holy angels, and you will receive this holy sacrament with such dispositions that God Almighty will bless you even more than when in the beginning He gave His benediction to our first parents, and told them to "increase and multiply."

Last time we spoke about the necessity of praying to know and to do God's Will in the choice of a state of life, and when we think we have discovered His dear Will for us, to prepare for that state, to strive to do all we can to enter upon it with good dispositions, and to perform its duties faithfully. Marriage is the state of life intended by God for the greater number, therefore we speak about that first. Not that it is the highest state in itself, but it is the best for many, because it is God's Will for them. The state of virginity, in which people live like the angels, is higher; the consecrated virgin, the Spouse of Christ, is higher still. Marriage has

been made into a sacrament by our Blessed Lord. It is a holy state. It is something to be rightly looked forward to by young girls. The title of wife and mother should be indeed held in esteem; it is a high dignity. Mother is a most sweet name. How sad is it that so many mothers disgrace their name. How sad that so many children are not able to respect their mothers, not able to regard them with the love and reverence they should. A mother should represent all that is loveable: a mother should be both gentle, kind, and firm.

Why is it so many mothers are irritable, cross, and weak-minded in their government of their children? How is it so many wives are slatternly women, untidy, disorderly, useless? Because, before they married they were giddy, given to flirting, thinking only of marrying, of being engaged, over-eager to be married simply from selfish motives, even before they knew if it was God's Will for them; simply from self-will and self-love, engaging themselves in a

moment to a state that should be entered upon with thought, preparation, and a full estimation of its grandeur, of its importance. "The mothers make the men," it is said, and rightly. Examine history, attend to what may be observed in our own times, and it will be plainly seen that, as a rule, the greatest men have had great and good mothers. A mother's office is so great, it almost seems to represent that of God. The mother brings souls into the world; God certainly creates them, but the mother is the medium through which He gives them. We do not say the mother is the mother of the body only, we say she is her child's mother, and the child certainly consists of body and soul. In the same way we say our Blessed Lady is the Mother of God; she gave our Lord His Body; the Soul of Jesus was created—like the souls of all others—by God, and that Soul and Body both assumed by the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and thus is our Lady the Mother of God.

Yes, our own Mother Mary is Mother

of God. Our Mother Mary is the great Mother above all mothers; she is an example to all. Why should not every Christian home represent to us the little home of Nazareth? When we see a good young mother, with her baby at her breast, we instinctively think of our Lady. Why should not every young mother be striving to imitate, in her degree, the most perfect of mothers?

There have been beautiful examples given us in the lives of the saints, of holy, happy, married lives; and without referring to canonized saints, there are at the present time many happy couples, many holy happy households; and why should not our Lady's and St. Philip's girls make the same? Let us pray to the dear Mother Heart of Mary to make them good mothers. Let us pray first to the dear St. Joseph to find them good husbands. Let us ask the Infant Jesus to send them good children in future years, and let our girls commence now to prepare for that life, by endeavouring to make themselves good

women, avoiding bad company and bad places, to respect themselves, to estimate rightly the dignity of their sex, to strive to overcome any bad inclination they may find within themselves, that their children, in after years, may not inherit these bad inclinations. This, however, we will speak about in another conference. We will finish this by asking our girls, who we know have good wills, to turn to the Maternal Heart of Mary, praying that that sweet Mother's Heart may inflame theirs. Do, dear girls, pray to be good women, and then you will be noble women, you will please God and be happy mothers. You will be respected by your husbands and children, and be like the good woman mentioned in Scripture, "her husband praised her, and her children rose up and called her blessed."

CONFERENCE II.

YOUNG GIRLS DO NOT RESPECT THE STATE OF MATRIMONY AS THEY OUGHT.

Dear girls, I want you so much to respect the married state, to which you are most of you called, that I am going to read to you the words of Scripture regarding it, and you know well the words of Scripture are God's words, they are inspired by the Holy Ghost, and there are no words on earth so beautiful or so true. The Bible is an infallible book, as the Church is the infallible expositor of that book, that is, she explains its meaning, or else the Holy Scriptures would not be of much use to us, for we should be saying it means this or it means that, as we hear so many people say who do as they are warned in the Holy Scriptures not to do, viz., "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction," instead of listening to the Church's explanation, as we are told to do: "Hear the Church; he that

will not hear the Church, let him be looked upon as a heathen and a publican;" in other words, "let him be anathema." Those are very wise who listen to that Church, and believe it to be equally God's Church and guided by the Holy Ghost, as the Bible is God's book, and inspired by the same Holy Spirit, and who believe that God is too wise to have given us a book of which we could make no use, since we should all interpret it so differently, and give it exactly opposite meanings, as we see is the case with those who reject the teaching of the Church.

Now the beautiful words of Scripture upon the married state, though you have them, or some of them, in your Missals, may not have been thought of sufficiently; and as I cannot but believe that it is the work of the evil spirit to represent the married state as something unholy, instead of being a sacrament, a holy state ordained and specially blessed by God, so it seems to me a work most pleasing to God's Holy Spirit to enforce the dignity of the married state on the

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any idea you have in your minds about the married state not being pleasing to God; I am copying here God's own words regarding it. I have known young girls enter the married state with a doubting, uncomfortable feeling that they are not pleasing God by it, and that if they wished really to please Him they ought to have become nuns. Now it is certainly not God's Will that all should become nuns, and it is God's will we have to do in this world if we would please Him, therefore it is more pleasing to Him that those whose vocation it is to be married should do so rather than that they should become nuns. Hear now the beautiful blessing God gives to married people. It is called

THE NUPTIAL BLESSING.

"O God, who, by the power of Thy might, didst create all things out of nothing: who, at the first forming of the world, having made man to the likeness of God, didst out of his flesh make the woman, and give her to him for a

helpmate; and by this didst inform us that what in its beginning was one ought never to be separated: O God, who by so excellent a mystery hast consecrated this union of the two sexes, as to make the bond of marriage a type of the great Sacrament of Christ and His Church: O God, by whom woman is joined to man, and that union, which was instituted in the beginning, is still accompanied with such a blessing as alone, neither in punishment of original sin, nor by the sentence of the deluge, has ever been recalled; mercifully look down upon this Thy handmaid, who, being now to be joined in wedlock, earnestly desires to be taken under Thy protection; may the yoke of love and peace constantly remain in her; may she marry in Christ faithful and chaste; may she ever imitate the holy women of former times; may she be pleasing to her husband like Rachel, discreet like Rebecca; may she in her years and fidelity, be like Sarah; and may the first author of all evil at no time have any share in her actions.

May she remain attached to the faith and the commandments, and being joined to one man in wedlock, may she fly all unlawful addresses; may a regularity of life and conduct be her strength against the weakness of her sex; may she be modest and grave, bashful and venerable, and well instructed in heavenly doctrine. May she be fruitful in her offspring, approved and innocent; and may it be at length her happy lot to arrive at the rest of the blessed in the kingdom of God; may they both see their children's children to the third and fourth generation, and live to their wished for old age. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

MASS FOR THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE AT THE BENEDICTION OF THE MARRIAGE.

Epistle. Ephesians v.

"Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord. Because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church; He is the Saviour of his body. Therefore, as

the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the Word of Life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh.' This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ, and in the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself; and let the wife fear her husband."

These are the words of the Holy Ghost. Think of them with pure minds. Ask your Guardian Angel to make you understand their beauty and import. Beg your Mother Mary's help, that you may reverence them as you should do, and when preparing for your wedding, or even if already married, often repeat to yourselves: "This is a great Sacrament; in Christ and in the Church."

CONFERENCE III.

A MOTHER AT THE DEATH OF HER CHILD.

Ah, what a sad sight is this! a mother standing beside her dead child, downwards from the first mother Eve, as she wept over her dead child. What a pain is it to anyone to witness this; but what is the pain to the poor mother's heart? that we cannot fathom. That child is part of herself, she brought it forth, and it is dead. No one but the mother can understand her pain. We have lingered

in thought over poor Eve looking upon her child Abel dead; we have grieved with her grief, that peculiar special grief she must have felt as she considered it was through her sin that he was dead. If she had not sinned, her child, her darling one, would not be now lying there cold, his loving eyes dim, his heart not beating. Yes, there is that extra grief for poor Eve, that additional bitter pang other poor sorrowing mothers have not, though they have sorrow enough. Again, there is our sorrowing Immaculate Mother Mary with Jesus dead in her arms. What special grief had she, far beyond our comprehension. Jesus her Son, her God, yet her own child, was dead, murdered by her people, by His own creatures. Well indeed she knew that they knew not what they did, as she sat, poor Mother, with the dead Christ in her arms: but should they not have known?

We watch thee, Mary the Mother above all mothers, and reflect how that thou art the model of all mothers, in that time of affliction, that time when

more than their own life seems taken, when a loved child is taken from them by death.

Ah, mothers! when you lose your loved ones, when your hearts are bitterly wrung, look to Mary, and learn from her resignation to God's Holy Will and patience. Meek, gentle, patient in her sorrow unlike any other sorrow, we see God's Mother with the stiff, cold Body of Jesus in her arms. She is resigned entirely to God's Will. She would not breathe a prayer that it should be otherwise, and yet it was such a cruel death He died because others had sinned. He died to save others from the effect of their sins. Look at that picture, dear girls, the fair Mother with her white gentle face, her blue mantle falling over the Body of the One she holds in her arms, whom she loved better than her life; see her heart heaving as she bends to kiss that loved Face that had ever looked on her tenderly when she spoke, the Eyes that had ever met hers with such love. They open not to look at her now. Oh mothers, you know that

pain when you have looked into the face of your dead child, and the eyes would not open to look at you; but if your child had been cruelly murdered what still greater pain would you not endure. It is the common fate of mothers to lose some of their children. They lose them often as infants, and how deeply they sorrow over them; what a void there is in their hearts. But, mothers, reflect, — are you not greatly favoured? Have you not done a grand work already for God? Have you not in part fulfilled your mission? God made you fruitful that you might bring up children for Him; you have already given Him a soul He dearly loves. Nothing can now interfere with the happiness of that soul; it is saved for ever, Blessed be God. It is a glorious saint in heaven. You are the mother of that beautiful saint who is now in bliss. Yes, you, a creature of earth, are the mother of that beautiful one who will live for ever in the court of God. You have a right to expect its prayers for you. Your poor little puny

infant, without reason, devoid of sense while here, is now wiser than the wisest on earth. Ah, what a consolation for you, when your children on earth are a trouble to you, to think of your beautiful child in heaven. Mothers, who have lost your children whilst infants, do not mourn, you are blest. Realize the next world, with its wondrous sights and sounds, the heaven above where God dwells, surrounded by angels and saints; see, and rejoice that your child is with them. Let this comfort you in dark, dreary moments,—the happiness of your child.

When death visits a grown up child also strive to be resigned in this grief, offering your sorrow for your dead child to obtain grace for your living ones. Be assured it is God's dear Will that you should lose your child; nothing happens without His permission. It is good for you that you should thus be grieved. It is good for your child that it is dead. There is a merciful Providence in this bereavement, if we could but see it. I once read a beautiful

story about a young man who travelled with one who appeared to be an old man, but who was really an angel in disguise. The account of the journey and its various occurrences is very interesting, for, the old man being an angel, and knowing the future by the light God had given him, often did things that greatly shocked his young companion, until matters were explained to him at last by the old man, who made known to him who he really was. One of the events of the journey was that, stopping at a house where lived a very happy family, they were very hospitably entertained by the good people, made very welcome, and enjoyed their visit much. What, then, was the horror of the young man, when he saw his fellow traveller actually destroy a beautiful boy of the family, most beloved by his father and mother, thus bringing sorrow and misery into what was before so happy a home. The meaning of this and of other things was explained afterwards by the angel. It was in mercy he had taken the life of

the child, commissioned of course to do so, on account of what its future would have been had it lived, and in order to spare their good hosts the terrible heartbreaking they would have had to endure from the bad life their child would have led. They would have had trouble upon trouble, and in the end the child would have been lost. By the apparently cruel act of the angel the parents suffered a temporary sorrow, but were saved a lifetime of anguish, and the child was saved eternal pain. So the story went on to show how various and how wonderful are the dispositions of Divine Providence. What seems a cruel blow, is, in reality, a mercy. So, dear girls, be prepared beforehand for this trial, which comes to most mothers, that of losing the child of their love, whether young or old. I have thought it well to give you this word of warning, as some mothers cause a great deal of discomfort and unhappiness in their homes when they are thus afflicted, and besides lose a deal of grace for their own souls, and the souls

of others, by their want of submission of will at this time of sorrow. Think over what I have said, and may your Guardian Angel suggest to you the many other thoughts that it would be well for you to reflect on in this matter.

CONFERENCE IV.

UPON THE MODESTY WHICH SHOULD BE POSSESSED BY OUR GIRLS.

Dear girls, you are at present virgins; do you value your virginity? Do you show your care for it? Or do you regard it so carelessly, expose it so recklessly, that it is plain you do not know its value, that you do not esteem it. If we have a treasure we guard it carefully. We take pains not to let it be spoiled, not to let it be lost. We may possess a treasure, and be careless about it, and let it spoil, or even lose it entirely, simply because we are not aware of its value. Many, very many

young girls are forward, bold, imprudent, because they do not value their virginity. They expose it recklessly and even sinfully, because they have never thought sufficiently, or realized as they should their own dignity, the beauty of their young virginity, the care they should take of it to preserve it in its freshness, until the time when God has decreed that the virgin should become a mother; and mark my words, I say "the time when GOD has decreed" that this change should take place. I do not mean the time when the foolish girl decrees in her own mind that she will change her state, in all haste to be married, to have a home of her own, and so forth. I am supposing that Our Lady's and St. Philip's Girls wish to do God's Will, that they trust God, that they know full well that He loves them, and will provide for their happiness in every way, if they do as He requires of them, knowing that His care of them is greater than any care they could have over themselves, and that His good Providence has arranged

their future, has provided their partner, has planned a happy life for all. But the greater number of young persons think they can arrange for themselves, plan for themselves, provide for themselves better than our good God can provide for them, and yet, when they have made their own bed, as the saying is, and are forced to lie upon it, too often then, wretched and unhappy from the misery they have brought upon themselves, they turn upon God and reproach Him as the cause of their unhappiness. But we are speaking now of modesty and virginity, though you will always see in these instructions how strongly I urge upon you the duty of trusting to God and fulfilling His Will, and seeking It rather than our own, and that whatever subject I may be speaking upon this will always flow in.

If we want to lead good lives, if we are bent upon acquiring virtue, it is no use thinking of it in a general way, and saying, I will be good and do all that is right, I will be very modest,

very humble, and so on; but we must enter into particulars, and think in what way we will be modest, humble, &c. There are many ways in which a young girl loses herself, loses her dignity, her modesty, and sad though it is to say it, loses her treasure of virginity, loses what a lifetime of tears and penance would not be too much to give, if by years of tears and sorrow she could regain it. Yes, there are many ways by which a young girl comes to lose her virginity, and this not so as to obtain the added grace of a Christian wife and mother, but so as to become a despicable object, one justly regarded as an outcast from society, outcast, I mean, until the poor fallen girl is truly penitent. The Magdalen came to Jesus, He welcomed her, He loved her, so would I receive one of you, if unhappily, which I pray from my heart may never be, if unhappily one should fall.

What leads to this unhappy fall? Vanity is at the root of it. A good simple girl, who is, however, vain and

frivolous, will be more easily led away, perhaps, than one less simple, less good. Vanity will be at the root of it. Her simplicity will make her less aware of her danger. She will fall: she has a good heart; she is stricken with horror at her fall. She is disgusted with herself; she is in despair. She thinks, "I have lost what I can never regain," and instead of endeavouring to prevent herself falling deeper and deeper, her despair makes her fall lower and lower, until the child of God, as once she was, becomes the miserable slave of Satan; and she might have stayed her onward course of sin if she had trusted the good, good God, and turned to Him for mercy and help when she first fell. Our loving Lord, our good Jesus, would have loved her perhaps more than before she fell, if she had trusted Him in that sad hour. The sin of Judas, the fearful crime of betraying his Master, the Son of God, was not so bad as his sin of despair. Let us never doubt Jesus. Let us not add to our sins, whatever they may be, this

sad, sad injury we do our dear Lord when we doubt His mercy.

In our next conference we shall speak of the dangerous occasions to modesty and virtue, which we had intended, had time permitted, to speak about in this. Perhaps some of you yourselves know what are the dangerous occasions of sin to you better than I could tell you. If so, I beg of you, by our dear Lord's prayer for you, to avoid them. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Mother, protect thy children from all who would hurt their virtue.

CONFERENCE V.

ON DANGEROUS OCCASIONS TO MODESTY AND VIRTUE.

We said we would speak, in this conference, of the occasions that lead to sin, that lead to young girls losing their great treasure, their innocence, their virginity. So many are they that we

will only indicate a few. In many cases it is ignorance of the danger, want of knowledge of the way in which they may be robbed of their treasure, and therefore want of guard. But we may say, as a rule, that it is vanity that leads to their fall, vanity is at the root of it. There was a sinful seeking of admiration, and I say *sinful* to distinguish it from that lawful desire a young girl may have to make herself attractive, with the intent of gaining a husband; as also there is the rightful desire of a wife to make herself pleasing and attractive to her husband. This is not sinful, on the contrary, it is virtue. St. Elizabeth of Hungary used to adorn herself with care that her husband might not commit the sin of admiring some other woman. So it is perfectly lawful for young girls to make themselves attractive, not for the purpose of gaining *many* admirers, but of gaining *one*.

Then, again, besides the sinful seeking to be admired and taken notice of, which so constantly leads to a young

girl's fall, there is speech, sinful speech. There are words which should never come from her mouth, expressions and words of double meaning, which should never come from the lips of a modest girl. Besides speech there are looks, such looks, looks leading to sin, looks that show to a man that the girl who bestows them has not much virtue. Again, there are places where it is sinful to be, places which, if frequented, will certainly lead to sin being committed. There are places, there are sights, there are sounds which will inevitably raise bad thoughts within the mind. There are places where bad company will be met, where wrong language will be used. There are so many things done thoughtlessly by some girls, but which lead to sin, that others, properly brought up with any self-respect, would never think of doing. What young girl, with proper respect for herself and her sex, would go out walking with one young man this week, with another the week after, and so on? What will such conduct probably lead to? One

thing it will certainly lead to: steady young men, those who will make good husbands, will slight her, and, far worse than this, it is dangerous to herself, it is likely to lead to her adding to the number of those who disgrace their sex, who are not worthy the name of women, who, by *their* sin, lead men to despise women in general. There are some men who do not believe in women's goodness, who regard them in something the same light as they do a pet dog or horse; these men believe all women to be vain and frivolous, and will openly profess their belief that there is hardly to be found in the world a thoroughly pure woman. Ah, my dear girls, what a sad thing this is. What a sad, what a lamentable thing. Will you not strive to do your best to be good women? I do not want you to be prudish, to affect a stiff manner, and so forth; I do not want that, I want you to avoid dangerous occasions, being in bad places, or doubtful places, reading bad books, frequenting bad company, putting yourselves in the way of temp-

tation, walking imprudently with young men, and so on. Some, who have very good hearts, through putting themselves in dangerous places, occasions to sin, have fallen, though their hearts were not bad. They are like fruits that are good in themselves, but bruised. Their hearts were good, like the core of the bruised fruit; they needed but that the bad part should be cut away. But there are others who have become rotten at the core before there is any exterior sign of badness. We know those fruits that look so fair exteriorly, but which are full of rottenness at the core. So is it with some people: their hearts change first, and become black and rotten, before there is any exterior act on their part, before they become bruised, before they have fallen into sin by outward act. Oh, do not let this be so with you. Do all of you pray earnestly to God to keep you in His grace. The dear good God loves you so intensely; He so wants you to be good. Do not disappoint Him. Do not be hateful instead of pleasing to Him. Do give

Him a little love in return for His great love. You like to dress and make yourselves pleasing to those around; you like to be clean and fresh; you would not like to have any dirt or unpleasantness about you, and yet how little you think or care when you have that about you that is displeasing to God. "God, Who is infinitely pure, hates infinitely the least stain." He does not hate the person of the sinner. Oh, no, dear God, too well has He shown His love for sinners. From His home in heaven our dear Lord looked upon a world of human beings, and His love brought Him amongst those sinners to love and care for them, nay, more, to die for them. Has He not said, with those dear human Divine lips of His, "I came not to call the just but sinners to repentance." He loved us first, unlovely that we were. Let us love our dear good God, lovely, beautiful, so worthy to be loved as He is. When we see Him in heaven, when we are with Him, when His arms are round us, when He is enfolding us in one

long, never-ending embrace of love, then will seem little indeed the trouble we took on earth to please that dear great and good God. We shall then

"Rest within the arms of God
And lie upon His Breast,
Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest."

Let us pray for this; let us strive and help one another to this glad happy end.

CONFERENCE VI.

UPON THE DIGNITY OF MOTHERS.

What a great dignity is that of a mother! Dear girls, who are now looking forward to hereafter being mothers, do think of it in a true, right light. Look upon it as God looks upon it, and respect yourselves as the instruments God makes use of to give His children to the world. He wishes you to bear fruit; He wishes you to bring forth

good fruit. It depends upon yourselves to do so; it depends upon yourselves now. Some of you have already engaged yourselves to the future partners of your lives. I trust you have done this with a pure intention, not from vanity, not from passion, but because you have found one who you have good reason to believe will enable you to fulfil God's Will; will enable you to lead a useful, holy life; will be a good father to the children God may hereafter give you, and help you to bring them up in such a manner that you hereafter meet them in heaven.

If, however, any one of you has engaged herself hastily to one whom she does not, in her heart, consider to be such a one as God intended for her, I say to her, Break off your engagement without hesitation, when your confessor advises you that you can lawfully do so, and wait patiently until such time as the one God intends for you presents himself, Providence will provide if you will but trust that Divine Providence. It is rather sad and unseemly, the way

our young girls in England seem anxious to provide for themselves, but they can scarcely be blamed, since parents do not do their duty. In many Catholic countries young people are introduced to one another by their parents, and far more care and delicacy taken about the matter than we see practised here. There is often, too, between Catholics here, a stiffness, a want of cordiality; young Catholics are not thrown together, consequently mixed marriages are but too frequent, and endless misery almost necessarily accrues from it.

How greatly women should respect themselves, and respect their office! There is not now in the world that chivalric feeling towards women that there was in old Catholic times, it gradually disappeared as the so-called Reformation spread. There is, however, a relic of this old Catholic feeling still left in some Catholic countries. We would there was more of it, and that women, too, looked upon themselves in a truer, grander light. It would make them

wish to correspond with God's designs in their regard, to fulfil well and rightly the office appointed them by God, to become like God Himself, by their God-like office of giving children to this world. "Increase and multiply," is the Divine command. In all purity of heart, then, in all simplicity, in a true womanly spirit, think upon this, and when you have once decided that the state of matrimony is the one intended by God for you, set about preparing yourself for it, as every reasonable person does set about an undertaking they have at heart, and are desirous of well fulfilling. As we have said elsewhere, any business or profession is carefully prepared for and studied, but the grand work of bringing children into the world, of becoming a good wife and mother, is left to chance. The young mother does not know what to do with her baby when she has it; numbers of children's lives are lost through the ignorance of their mothers; numbers of delicate children are exposed to many dangers through the ignorance and

carelessness of the mother, as regards both herself and her child. So, too, with respect to the soul of the child, as we mentioned more fully before; the mother does not know the influence she has upon her child's soul before it is born, neither does she know how to train that precious immortal soul when the child advances in age, and needs careful watching to correct the evil dispositions that soon begin to make their appearance, and to root out the ill weeds as they appear, and to foster the good seed, the good inclinations of the soul, and make it take root and bring forth the blossoms and the fruit of a virtuous life.

Do not, then, dear girls, look at your vocation to the married state as a light matter; it is, indeed, a most solemn and serious one; it implies ordinarily becoming a mother, and we repeat again and again that this is a God-like office. What a disgrace was it considered in old times to be childless. There seems to have crept in, in later times, a certain feeling of shame in being a mother.

Why is this? Ah! well is it said, "to the pure all things are pure." We live in a corrupt age, and things are looked on with an evil eye that God intended should be good and pure. "Evil be to him that evil thinks." There is such a squeamishness amongst some young women that they could not bring such an important matter as becoming a good mother before God in prayer. They could not prepare to make themselves sensible, useful women, by learning all that they can about the important office of a mother. No, there are many foolish women, making unhappy homes, not exactly by sinfulness, but by silliness.

Make, then, dear girls, this your earnest prayer, such of you as have satisfied yourselves that it is your vocation in this world to become wives and mothers, that you may spare no pains to become worthy ones. You will pray to the Mother above all mothers, to fit you for this great work in the world, to become truly good mothers,

and, please God, to have truly good and noble children.

Do pray that you may be the joyful mother of many children, that you may have loving and beloved children, that you may so live that they may respect you, that nothing in you may disedify them or lessen their love for you, that you may so bring up those God may entrust to you, that their Guardian Angels may love you and surround your path with blessings, and cause you joy both in this world and the next, where you will happily rejoice with the children you laboured so well to bring up for the God Who, in His love and mercy, gave them to you. Thus and thus alone can a mother save her own soul by saving the souls of her children.

CONFERENCE VII.

OUR WORKS FOLLOW US.

We have said what a happiness it must be, when we reach heaven, to look upon this earth and see and know that, though we are no longer able to work for God, the works we commenced for God are bearing fruit on earth, are giving Him glory, and will go on increasing and fructifying, will continue to increase God's honour and glory till the Day of Judgment. In very many ways do our works follow us and continue after our death. We may bring some poor soul to the knowledge of the faith, that soul may teach it to others, and those to others, and thus multiply the fruit of Jesus's Passion. We may write good books, and the good effects of them in souls may still continue to be produced after our death for hundreds of years; or we may build a church, or found a convent. But what may Our Lady's and St. Philip's Girls

do, for they cannot do some of these things I have mentioned? This they may do, they may be good mothers, and bring into the world good children. They may commence now to prepare themselves for their noble office. They may begin the good work by preparing themselves now, and this, as we showed before, they cannot do without the grace of God. They will therefore esteem grace, they will value it as a priceless good. They will seek it, and so work with it that their children will be really children of grace. Thus what happy mothers they may be, and, please God, they will be. They will bring into this sinful world children of God. God will most graciously and lovingly entrust His children to their care, and we do hope that our girls will not disappoint God, will not let the precious souls He entrusts to them be spoilt. We know that if we want to do a thing well, to succeed in anything, we must take pains about it, we must use all the necessary means, and not trust to chance. You find this is the case in

your daily work. You know that if you are careless, the work, whatever it be, will be probably spoilt. If you are entering upon some new business, you take every means to enable you to succeed in it; you study to learn all you can about it. You know that if you were entering upon some new trade you have first to learn it. How is it, then, that the one great business of women is so neglected to be learnt? They will change their state of life without learning or seeming to care to learn their new duties. They become wives and mothers without a thought of the awful responsibility they entail upon themselves by doing so. I may appear to be saying the same things over and over again, but I do want, my dear girls, to see you happy mothers, filling the world, peopling the earth with good children. Thus, indeed, may your works follow you. From your home in heaven you will hereafter see your children working for God, serving Him happily, perhaps far more happily and successfully than you yourselves did,

because you were good mothers to them, because you restrained your passions, and curbed your evil inclinations, and thus brought your children into the world more free from those bad dispositions and inclinations, which you yourselves may have found it so difficult to contend with, so difficult at times that it seemed almost a hopeless task to fight against them, but which you did however contend with, and conquer too, in the end.

This point, however, of the influence of a mother over her yet unborn children, will be the subject of a separate conference, and perhaps of more than one, as it is so important. Our aim in this conference has been to show the happiness it will be, when we can no longer work for God, when we are enjoying our repose and rest with Him, and would so much wish to do, or to have done more for Him, to be able to see, from this our happy home in God's Bosom, the works we commenced on earth for Him increasing, fructifying, and glorifying the great and good God,

Whom, when you have once seen, upon Whose sweet Face when you have once looked, when your ears have once listened to the loving, gentle tones of His voice, you will indeed long to have served with greater ardour, and loved with a purer, more generous, self-sacrificing love. Begin now to look upon that God, to think of Him, to learn how worthy He is to be loved, and thus give Him your whole hearts, and promise Him, when He sends you children, that you will give Him their hearts too, that you will teach them to be all for God. You will bring them up for Him; and when they, too, have finished their course, with what joy will you greet them as they enter their heavenly home, receiving from God the crown He has prepared for those who served Him faithfully on earth.

CONFERENCE VIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF A MOTHER UPON HER YET UNBORN CHILD.

There is a saying that it is "the mothers who make the men." There is another: "Convert the mothers, and the world will be converted." What a great, what a grand office is the office of a mother. I am repeating the same things over and over again, but I do so want to impress them upon you. What a mighty work in the world do mothers execute, both for good and evil. What might they not do for good, and what a vast deal of evil do they not do; it is not known what an amount of good or of evil mothers do. I am not now speaking of that all-important matter, the bringing up of children; that will be the subject of another conference. I am writing now about what is thought so little of, indeed so little known, that it is wonderful how ignorant even women well educated in other matters

are upon this. A young married lady, to whom I was one day speaking about the little one she was bearing, upon my explaining to her something concerning her child and its soul, that of course was within her, looked at me with wonder, and said: "Two souls! mine and baby's." She had not known before that her child had a soul before it was born. You may smile at such ignorance, but it is not at all an uncommon case. We all have our souls from the first moment of our existence within our mother's womb. And the soul of a mother has a wonderful influence on the child within, and it is upon this point that I wish you to think now. It is for the sake of the children God may give to you, that I wish you earnestly to strive to purify your own souls, to curb yourselves, to correct your evil inclinations.

I was speaking one day to a lady about the evil habit her child had of not speaking the truth. (I knew she herself had the same failing.) "Dear me," was the reply, "I cannot under-

stand it, but she always has been given to speak falsehoods, almost as soon as she could lisp." "And more shame for you," I could have replied, "who gave, by your own evil custom, this bad habit to your child, who brought it into the world with this sad evil inclination." I do not suppose this lady had the least idea of connecting her child's untruthfulness with her own as its cause. No, it is seldom a mother does, though she ought to see her own evil dispositions, and repent of them, when she sees them in her child; when she sees the child's face clouded with moroseness or resentment, its countenance distorted with anger, does she see herself as in a mirror? She should do so, for it is the giving way to her own passions that has produced them in her children. Few mothers, indeed, have to endure the pain of one I knew, whose child from its birth had the appearance of being tipsy. It was a sad sight. When I first saw the child it was reeling about in a convent school, the nuns having taken it from sheer pity, as it

might have been refused admittance elsewhere. The poor child could not stand straight, it had the imbecile, leering, foolish look of a tipsy person. It would roll about in its endeavours to get from one part of the school to another, and was altogether a most heart-rending object.* Think of the beautiful soul God had given that poor little being. He had entrusted this heavenly gift to an earthly mother, she was to bring it into the world. Behold how she had betrayed her trust by her sin. What care is taken of a jewel or precious stone if it is entrusted to us, and yet what culpable negligence is shown when such a treasure, such a jewel,—set indeed within a mould of clay, the immortal soul set within the human body,—is given to a mother to guard. She is responsible, in a certain degree, for the souls of her children, as she is for her own; but the subject of

* The gentle Dr. Grant, the late lamented Bishop of Southwark, severely reproved this unfortunate mother, pointing out to her the sad consequences of her sin of intemperance.

the responsibility of parents will be the subject of a separate conference.

Our object in this is to impress most earnestly upon our girls the influence they will have, when they become mothers, upon the children God may give them,—the influence their own passions and sins will have upon their children whilst yet unborn. There is a double meaning in the words of Scripture: "That the sins of parents shall descend upon their children." We are now simply pointing out how the sins of the mother affect her *unborn* child; how the beautiful soul, entrusted to the mother by God, is affected and injured by its contact with the medium through which it is given to the world. The earthly mother is the medium through which God gives the immortal soul to this world, and before that mother has brought it into the world she has tarnished God's precious gift. Is it not sad? Does it not make us tremble to think that during the short time that we live we can do such mischief for eternity? Oh, God! it is terrible to

think; it is awful, that the very short space we have allotted us of time, the short span of existence we call our life, can be employed in doing such mischief for eternity, in damaging immortal souls. Dear God! it is fearful: take pity upon our poor human nature; Thou knowest how weak we are, how strong are our passions and temptations. Inspire Christian mothers with grace; fill the world with good mothers, let them not contaminate their children, ere their birth, with passions that are so difficult to be kept in check that those possessed by them are often inclined to throw down their arms and to fight no more against the temptations which their sinful mothers introduced into their souls. Dear God, be merciful; send mothers on earth with spirits more of heaven than earth, that they may regenerate the world, and so a new generation be born with souls not troubled, distressed, with inherited evil dispositions, bound, as it were, with chains that keep them from serving Thee as Thou shouldst be served. We know

Thou judgest with equity. We know Thou art merciful, and hast pity for the poor tempted sinners; Thou dost compassionate their weakness, Thou knowest the difficulty of combatting with temptations when once deeply rooted in the soul. Oh God, rise in Thy power, rise in Thy mercy and might; take pity on the yet unborn babes that are to come into this world. Purify the mothers; make them true mothers, make them devoted, earnest, zealous, loving, imitating the model of all mothers, our own dear Mother Mary. Mother, sweet Mother, inspire them with thy spirit; breathe into them a breath of thy own Mother-love.

CONFERENCE IX.

UPON ESTEEM OF GRACE.

Do consider, dear girls, that you have the fearful power of disappointing God. You can cross His Will. He has formed you for a special end; He has

created you to do some special work for Him, and you have the power to say you will not do what He wishes, what He asks from you. Now I know you have all said that you will do your best to fulfil the sweet Will of God. You have said it often, and yet you have crossed dear Jesus. Never mind; thank that dear Lord that you have risen after each fall resolved to do better, and you pleased your dear Lord by your trust in Him, by your hope in His mercy. Yes; you know God loves to forgive, to show mercy. The Good Shepherd has lifted you out of many a thorny bush. You have in spirit kissed the wounded Hands of Jesus as He lifted you up bruised and bleeding, and you have loved Him more for so tenderly overlooking your unkindness, your coldness, your neglect of His love. You do indeed want now to show Him you are grateful; you do want to do His Will; you do desire to live in this world simply to fulfil that Will; you do want to be good women, and if Jesus wills, good mothers. What is the one thing that will ensure your

succeeding, what will make you persevere? There is one certain means of persevering; and there is one certain means of failing. There is one only way by which we shall surely please God, fulfil the duties of our state, do good in this world, and even when we have left it, and are in our happy home in heaven, view with pleasure the works we began on earth progressing and giving glory to God. We want to do good; to be happy on earth, we want to leave good behind us when we go from this world to a better; we want to see and know there that our labours of love for God have not ended, but are still producing fruit. The poet says,

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We may make our lives sublime;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sands of time."

We want to do more than this; we want to have sown so well, that flowers and fruits shall be constantly appearing from the beautiful plants that have sprung from our seed. We shall in

another conference consider this point, and show how among the greatest and best works we can leave behind us are good children.

We are bent in this Conference upon showing what is the best way, what is the *one* way, and the only way to persevere: IT IS TO VALUE GRACE. Grace is the spiritual food of the soul. Our bodies get weak without food, and so do our souls; and we cannot save our souls without grace. Grace can be so easily had; grace is more plentiful than water. Grace is meat as well as drink for the soul. It is as necessary for the soul as the very air we breathe is necessary for the body. Oh! if we did but value grace how happy we should be; a halo of joy and peace would surround us wherever we went, and sweeten even our sorrows. The *little* trouble it would put us to in order to obtain it would be well repaid. A little visit to the Author of all Grace, our dear Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, might inconvenience us, perhaps, a little; it might take up a quarter of an hour, or half an hour of

our time, and it might save us hours and hours of uneasiness, of unhappiness. A little exertion to get to our weekly confession; a *great* exertion it may be, perhaps, sometimes to rise in the morning and go out fasting to receive Holy Communion, would save us not alone days, not alone weeks, not alone months, but years, aye, and not only years of time, but it may save the soul pain, misery, and woe, for the unending ages of eternity. Do, dear girls, be warned in time. I could write, and go on writing about this matter. I have said it elsewhere, but will repeat it here: If you asked any of the most miserable of human beings, the poor lost souls in hell, "why they were lost," what would they answer if they answered truthfully? They would say: "*We are in hell for ever for the loss of grace.*"

How do you lose grace? By so many, many ways. From neglecting the first act for God in the morning, the sign of the cross, we have lost a grace; then the rising diligently, lovingly; then the morning's prayers; then the daily duties

have each a grace when performed in union with the Will of God. Untold is the grace we derive from a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; and then we come to those fountains of grace, the Sacraments. How can we neglect the Sacraments! and yet how some do! Ask your director how often you should frequent the Sacraments, and then dread to omit your accustomed time, whether it is once a month, once a fortnight, or once a week. If you have any love for the safety of your immortal soul; if you love any soul on earth and wish to do it good, do not neglect your Confession and Communion at the appointed time. You will most certainly fall if you do. By the loss of the Sacraments you lose graces God was earnestly, anxiously, longing to give you to save you from your and His enemy; but you did not come to receive these graces, and you fell into the hands of Satan, and Satan laughed at your folly; he made sport of you. God help your poor children when the devil has hold of you. You could tell me nothing you have done during

that time that would surprise me. But what a pity, a child of God to be the sport of the devil; what a sad, sad thing. Pray now earnestly, pray daily, hourly, for grace not to neglect grace; but remember, you must exert yourselves; you must put yourselves to trouble; you must use your will well. You must go to meet grace; you must value it; you must dread to lose it. Pray now to the Mother of Divine Grace, God's fair instrument by which He gives His graces, His treasures; pray to her for that grace of graces, the knowledge of the value of grace, the deep dread of losing it, and the constant endeavour to obtain it for ourselves and others; so shall we, walking here on earth by the smooth flowing rivers of God's grace, be hereafter lost, engulphed, in an ocean of divine glory, on the Bosom of God.

CONFERENCE X.

ON WOMAN'S DOMESTIC LIFE.

What evil arises in the world from untidy, disorderly, slatternly women, thoughtless women; women who think more of dressing themselves, and adorning themselves, than of dressing a dinner, and adorning their homes. There are other women who are not so vain, and do not spend their time in dressing themselves, but who seem too lazy to exercise their faculties and learn useful things; women who cannot be punctual; women who cannot clean a house; women who cannot cook a dinner. Sin and misery follow in the wake of such women; wretched homes, unhappy husbands, cross and troublesome children. And yet, with a little thought, with a little care, with an earnest desire to make home comfortable, women might carry light, brightness, happiness, wherever they went. They should be like sunbeams; they

should have something more than a pretty face, and do a great deal more than a pretty face can do. A pretty face can attract; but it cannot keep. Men almost unconsciously rely upon women. They are pleased with a pretty face; and it is perfectly allowable, as we have said before, nay, even right, for women to make themselves as attractive as they can, if it be with a good and right intention; but that is not sufficient. A man looks upon a woman—a good man, at least, does so—almost as his superior; as someone who can do things he cannot do; as someone who can do things most useful, nay, necessary to his happiness. And the woman, because of her capability of doing these things for him, is most esteemed and relied upon by the husband or the brother. She has great power over him; she can wonderfully influence him and do him vast good, if she uses her influence well. What a misery it is that all women do not use their influence over men well; it is an awful responsibility. How sad, indeed, that it should be so! Ah, do

from this moment, dear girls, begin to look upon yourselves as intended by a good Providence to be guardian angels to men, using a kind of insensible unconscious influence over them, because if this power were openly paraded and asserted, it would probably be resisted and resented from motives of pride, and thus, perhaps, the influence would be lost.

Take, then, for your example the Guardian Angels. See how quietly they work and use their influence; they are not seen, they are not heard. They work in a hidden, loving way. But I am digressing from the subject of this conference, which is the beauty of domestic life, the beauty of performing hidden acts of virtue, little noticed by the world, but most pleasing in the sight of God. Carry, however, the thought away with you, and resolve, if God sees fit, as you probably each of you here believe it to be His Will, that you should marry, resolve now to be guardian angels to your husbands, ministering to their wants with alacrity,

with diligence. A tidy, clean woman, who will make a house bright and cheerful for her husband, who goes about her work in an orderly way, who is industrious and quick at what she does, will have an influence over her husband that a lazy, awkward woman will never have. He could never look upon a dirty, an untidy woman as an angel to him; such a wife is not respected by her husband, and therefore cannot influence him. He may hardly acknowledge this to himself, but it is, nevertheless, true. A man likes to be proud of his wife. See how Scripture speaks of the good woman. "She looketh well to the paths of her household, and eateth not her bread idle." A wife should set before her mind the thought that God is watching her in her house; she should take a pride in it; she should constantly have the thought of God's Presence in it. We have the example of our Blessed Lady in her cottage at Nazareth. She lived a simple, womanly, domestic life; and God has shown us how He loves home-life, by putting the one who is

Blessed above all women in this state of life. May our children imitate their Mother; may they prepare themselves well for the holy, happy state of life of wife and mother. If they do so God will send them a good husband; one really worthy of them. He will send them a home, which they may look upon as the little house of Nazareth. Let them prepare themselves; let them trust Him, and it will come without fail. That God will protect our girls and make them true women is the prayer of the sisters, who love them so dearly in our Mother's Heart.

CONFERENCE XI.

ON THE RESPONSIBILITY PARENTS ENTAIL UPON THEMSELVES BY BRINGING CHILDREN INTO THE WORLD.

Children are gifts from God. Yes, but hardly gifts, they are rather loans than gifts; loans of God, and they have

to be treated as such. It has to be remembered that God has entrusted immortal souls to the care of earthly parents, to be so brought up on earth that they may be His children for ever in heaven. Such is the light in which they should be regarded, and then there would come in the minds of parents a certain feeling of respect for their children. If looked upon in the light of God's children, what a different treatment they would receive. If the Queen entrusted her children to your care, promising a great reward to you if you brought them up well, how great would be your care of them. If parents looked upon their children more in the light of children really belonging to God, His property, and remembered that they have the care of them from God and for God, what a change would ensue in their behaviour to them.

Parents bring children into the world; what an awful responsibility! It is so serious, so awful, because the human beings, who are their offspring, cannot be asked whether they will come

into the world or not. No, they bring souls into the world which are under the necessity of doing certain things in order to gain heaven, in order to save their souls from an eternity of misery in hell, and yet parents bring these souls into the world with sad drawbacks and hindrances to their attaining that end for which God made them, by reason of the inclination to evil passions, which they, by giving way to their own passions, have imparted to their children. This we have spoken of elsewhere, and at present our object is to show the responsibility parents have of bringing up their children carefully, training them, guarding them from evil, and especially recollecting that until they come to the use of reason, the parents are especially bound to be in the place of reason to their children. We mean by this, that as to commit a sin we have to use our reason, for persons who have no reason cannot sin, although they may commit the material act of sinning, as for instance, a madman may strike another a deadly blow,

which would be a material, but not a formal sin, he not being sane, not having the use of reason, and therefore not accountable, and incapable of sinning: so children, in like manner, are not capable of grievous sin until they come to the use of reason, and the parents till then stand in the place of their reason to them. They have to watch them and guard them from evil, wrong sights, wrong sounds, wrong words, wrong deeds. They must show them what is wrong before their own reason shows it to them, before they have learned the law of God, so as to know when they break it. They have carefully themselves to give them good example, and to see that those they are left with likewise give them good example, for it is hardly to be conceived how great is the force that bad example has upon a child's mind. A child may have naturally a pure mind, be naturally modest, and some grown up person is not so discreet as he or she should have been before the child, and the first step towards uprooting that

child's native modesty is taken. It might never remark to any one the impression made, but the strong impression is there. The natural respect it has for a grown up person, and its conviction that this person knows better than itself, which is the natural humility of childhood, all this is turned to a bad account. God implants in children's minds a confidence in their parents and others who are set over them, but how sadly often is this great good the source of pernicious evil?

If, as I have said, parents have to be in the place of reason to their children, most particularly until they come to the use of reason, how lamentably do they fulfil their charge. Look at that beautiful little one, with its eyes fixed upon its mother or its father, whom it loves, quick to believe all it is told, to do what it sees done; and think of the beautiful soul in that little body, the beautiful soul, as well as body, entirely entrusted to the care of an earthly father and mother. God help them; it is an awful charge. They,

indeed, the best of them, need God's help, or they cannot fulfil their duty. And then look at the conduct of many parents, careless, indifferent, confident. Bow down, you who are not yet parents, bow down and pray that when a gift from heaven is given you, when a beautiful immortal soul is entrusted by God to your keeping, you may be prepared in some measure to guard it, and to feel as the good Queen Blanche did, who would say in earnest tones to her little boy, Louis,—afterwards St. Louis, King of France,—"Louis, I would rather see you dead at my feet, than that you should ever commit a mortal sin." And he never did. In the midst of the distractions and allurements of his life he kept his baptismal innocence unstained; and how greatly must he have been indebted for this to the prayers and good example of his holy mother. Good men, almost without exception, most great and good men, have had good mothers. Will not you, too, bring into this world noble creatures of God? It is in your power; you may if you will. Let their

first impressions in this world be good ones; do not suffer their fresh young minds to be tainted with evil. Remember, "children's minds are wax to receive, and marble to retain;" that impressions are as easily made upon their young minds as figures are drawn upon wax, and that it is no less difficult to remove them than it is to efface what is sculptured upon marble.

Many are the stories told of the early impressions made upon children's minds. An old priest told us how a little fellow came to him one day evidently under the impression that grown-up people had no need of praying, that prayers were only for children. The little boy accosted the priest with this salutation: "I've been breeched to-day;" and, putting his hands in his pockets, "I'm a man now, I shall say no prayers." "How is that?" said the priest. "Why," was the reply, "father is breeched, father is a man, father says no prayers."

Again the same priest narrated that, asking a little boy what his name

was, he received the answer: "Devil." "That's not a pretty name," he replied; "how did you come by it?" "Well," said the little fellow, "father calls out to me: 'Here, you young Devil;' mother says, 'Get out of the way, little Devil,' so I suppose they gave it to me." Laughable as these anecdotes appear, they are sad in the extreme. Parents should represent God to their children, and we see them almost representing the devil. We have said sufficient for one conference, we shall continue this subject in another, only now entreating our children, as they kneel before our Lady's and St. Philip's altar, to beg of the Blessed Mother and St. Philip to bestow upon them that beautiful grace of influence over others, that power of doing good to others, by word and example, which is such a great gift from God. We will beg our Mother's blessing, we will beg Father Philip's blessing, that these souls, whom God may hereafter entrust to us, whether as our own by nature, or in a spiritual manner, may be led by our good influence through

the dangers of this world to the beauties, the peace, the joy, and the happiness of our everlasting home in heaven.

CONFERENCE XII.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

We have spoken of the influence of a mother's character upon her child yet unborn; we have shown how she brings her child into the world with her own passions rooted in it: her evil and good inclinations are imparted to her child. Now what has the mother to do with a child born with naturally bad inclinations? Can she correct the evil afterwards? Yes, indeed, to a great extent, though, it may be, by a difficult, painful process. There are some sins hereditary in families, the sins of the parents descend upon their children to the third and fourth generation; therefore, even good parents may have children with bad dispositions. The children of good parents are also, of course, tempted like

all others by the devil; and often a good child will, by yielding to the temptation, to the surprise and pain of the parents, turn unexpectedly from its good dispositions, and show in an extraordinary manner evil inclinations, and commit sins, to their great grief and surprise. Now this must not be wondered at; there may have been some neglect on the part of parents, or there may not. It is very painful to see how soon a good child can become a bad one. Parents cannot be too careful in checking the evil in its very commencement, if, happily, they find the child's sin out in time. If not, the child who committed the sin the first time with difficulty, will commit it again the second time with less difficulty, and so on until the habit of sin is fixed, the sin becomes habitual, others follow in the train, and virtue and the desire of good gradually die away in the soul of the poor unfortunate boy or girl. Some children are more tried by the devil than others. It sometimes happens that even grand souls looking back upon their childhood or

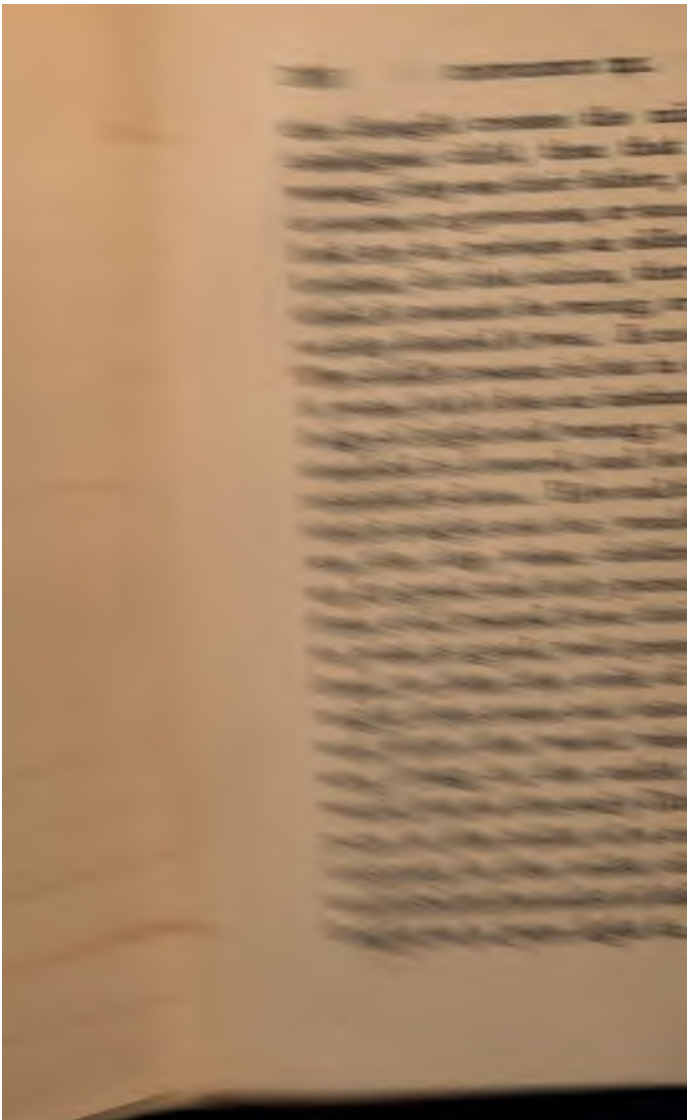
youth, find continual food for humiliation in the remembrance of sins committed. It may be that the devil foresees the grandeur of the soul, the good it may one day do, and tries harder to win it to his side. It may be that God permits greater temptations to the soul for its own humiliation; but however it be, it may be a source of comfort to some parents, whose hearts are wrung by the ill conduct of their children, to remind them of this, that so they may be encouraged to persevere in their prayers and in their penances for their children, for, perhaps, their present misconduct is but the prelude to a future life of sanctity, of entire devotedness to God; and God, by the very pain the children are inflicting on their parents, may evoke that powerful prayer of the human heart that draws such great graces from Himself.

We will now return to the subject of the watchful care which parents must constantly exercise over their children,

ır their natural dispositions may

ldren are not supposed to come

to the use of reason until about their seventh year; they may in particular cases do so either before or after, but as a rule they do not. Now, if the child has not reason, what is there to guide it? If it is not answerable itself, is no one answerable for its actions, for the right use of its senses? Yes, most certainly yes; the parents are placed by God to be as the reason of their children until they possess reason of their own, and to supply its place, to watch over their child's senses, to see that its eyes look at proper objects, its feet walk in proper places, its mouth speaks proper words, and so on. How many parents are there who think of this? How many parents guard the purity of their children's minds sedulously, jealously, carefully? How easily is that purity tarnished! how easily is their idea of what is right brought to a lower level! They have a natural respect for grown up people; they think them better than themselves: and they see someone whom they look up to do an action they thought was wrong, and immediately



the thick darkness of the world. How deplorable it is that this is not, when it might certainly be, if parents would do their part. If parents did but do their duty the world might be reformed, it might be filled with noble men and women. This, I say, might be; why is it not? Alas, why is it not?

Women, use your power; women, be good wives and mothers; each in your own circle use your influence, even you have apparently insuperable difficulties. If you are now, or if you be at some future time, the wife of one who opposes you, who unfortunately not of the same faith as yourself, he is does not practise it, do not give up in despair. Persevere, be a good wife, you will be a noble woman, be a good mother, and surely you will have your reward. Single-handed, a single-handed woman can work her way,—sustained and regards human help: but supported help from on high, helped by saints, a good woman is helped and blessed in her course and blessed in her walk her every footsteps heaven attend her every footsteps

the thought crosses the mind of an intelligent child, then that can't be wrong; they see their father, or mother, or nurse, or governess, or some one they look up to, perhaps an elder sister or brother, do that action, therefore they think it cannot be wrong, or so wrong as they fancied it was. Is not this sad? The child's reason is but in the bud, as it were, but it has an instinctive knowledge of right and wrong; and now its standard is lowered, and how soon the mischief is done. How sad this is. Ah, that it might not be; would we might see the day when children, brought up by good and holy parents, shielded from evil, trained from their childhood to what is good, well prepared beforehand to face the evils of the world, might thus come out into the world, and show the world what Christians are, living in the midst of a sinful world, but as the early Christians lived, pure in the midst of a corrupt world, innocent in the midst of wickedness, undefiled in the midst of defilements, and bright as a pure light in the midst of

the thick darkness of the world. How deplorable it is that this is not, when it might certainly be, if parents would do their part. If parents did but do their duty the world might be reformed, it might be filled with noble men and women. This, I say, might be; why is it not? Alas, why is it not?

Women, use your power; women, be good wives and mothers; each in your own circle use your influence, even if you have apparently insuperable difficulties. If you are now, or if you shall be at some future time, the wife of one who opposes you, who unfortunately is not of the same faith as yourself, or if he is does not practise it, do not give all up in despair. Persevere, be a good woman, be a good wife, be a good mother, and surely you will win the day. Single-handed, a noble woman can work her way,—single-handed as regards human help: but sustained by help from on high, helped by angels, helped by saints, a good woman will walk her course and blessings from heaven attend her every footstep. Ever

onward will she proceed in her heavenward path, bringing others with her, bringing the fruit of her womb to Jesus, and will be blessed eternally by Him.

Dear children, take to heart what I say, think over it, ponder it. Be earnest, be sincere, be truthful; acknowledge before God any hindrances there may be in your soul to your becoming what you know God wishes you to be, but resolve that you will, as far as depends on you, save your children, if God in His goodness gives them to you, that you will save them from such inclinations and passions as are opposed to His reign in their souls, by bringing them up in such a manner that they shall not have the difficulties to contend with which you may have in yourselves, difficulties partly hereditary, partly brought on, perhaps, by bad training when you yourselves were children, partly brought on by yourselves: still, as regards yourselves, you are not to be disheartened; lay the past in the lap of God's mercy, and resolve by His grace to rise again, to make atonement to Him for your

sins by your care of those He may give you, and to use every endeavour that you can to make yourselves what is so intensely dear to God, true, holy women, devoted, generous, self-sacrificing mothers, and mothers after the Heart of the Mother above all mothers, who will teach you how to become what God wishes you to be, if you appeal to her confidently. But this will be the subject of another conference, — the means of becoming what God wishes you, and how to be good mothers. We have already mentioned one great means, the making good use of every grace, the valuing grace; the next means will be the having recourse to Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother. That she may bless you all now, my children, and make you happy in this life and in the next, is the prayer day and night of her who is now writing these few words for the good of yourselves and those who come after you.

CONFERENCE XIII.

THE SOUL IN EXISTENCE AT THE INSTANT OF CONCEPTION.—PREMATURE BIRTH OF CHILD; SO MANY SOULS ARE LOST THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN BAPTISED.

Dear children, you may feel a natural delicacy in reading about matters that are principally necessary to be known by mothers, but what I wish to put before you now is that when you have become wives and mothers, it is necessary you should know many things, ignorance of which might endanger both the souls and the bodies of the children God may give you. Some mothers are culpably ignorant of matters which it was their bounden duty to know. Children leave this world without being made children of God by the waters of baptism; they will never see God. For ever and for ever they will be shut out from the sight of the ever-beautiful, loving God, when with so little trouble they might have been

washed and made beautiful in the Blood of Jesus, and enabled to gaze upon the vision of the Blessed Trinity in heaven. Little buds they were, plucked indeed here before they had expanded, but which would have opened and blossomed in Paradise, and given fresh delight to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. But the sin of Adam was not washed from their souls; they may not enter heaven. How sad is this. Do think of it; do try to hinder this from happening in your own children, and the children of those around you. Each one could do her part if she would. How often do we hear of the premature births of infants; but how many are there who think or care whether these infants were baptized or not? indeed, how many are there who remember that the infants have souls at all? As we have said elsewhere, many even well-educated women, are strangely ignorant of the fact that the infant they are carrying within them has a soul; they know not that the moment they conceived there was an immortal soul within them, a soul created to the

likeness of the Ever Blessed Trinity, purchased by the Blood of Jesus, a soul for whom He lived and died. Ah, save that soul, dear angels, make women learn their duty. As we have said before, people would be ashamed to be as ignorant of the duties of any other state of life as wives and mothers are of their especial duties. There is an apprenticeship to serve if one intends to become a master in a trade; there are studies, examinations, and the rest, to be gone through by those who undertake the charge of educating children for this world. Now with young girls about to marry, or be married, why should not elders, why do not their own mothers give such instructions upon many necessary things concerning the children God may give them; why should they not themselves, why do they not seek such instructions?

What is not often the first result of a young girl's married life, but that through her carelessness and ignorance, a beautiful soul is lost to God for ever, for ever deprived of the possession of Him. The

young mother knew nothing about her duties as a mother, as we have repeated so constantly in these writings, she may not even have known, or at all events never reflected, that she bore within her a beautiful soul, that of her child, a priceless treasure which she was bound to guard. A premature birth may take place, the child dies unbaptized, and no one thinks, perhaps no one cares, that a soul that might have been has not been baptized, from sheer ignorance both on the part of the mother and of those around.* Mothers must be more earnest, they must be more desirous of knowing their duties, but nurses also and others should possess more knowledge than they usually do upon these all-important matters. Do then think over these things. Think of the necessity of knowledge about these most important matters. Think, mothers, of your beautiful office; guard the fruit of your

* It may not be generally known that an infant can be baptised before birth in a case of necessity, that is, when there is a probability that it will not be born alive.

womb, use all natural means, as well as supernatural, to save the souls the Good God commits to your care. It is a grief, no doubt, to you when you do not bring your children to mature birth; but you might if you would have brought their souls to birth in heaven, but you did not do it. The soul of your infant within you was in the order of nature perfect, though its body might not be; it came into the world before its time, it might have been living, you know not. Ask for information and instruction on this subject, and then the premature birth of an infant will not be always the misfortune it generally is at present. Instances are far from uncommon of new-born children dying simply for want of proper treatment. No breath is inhaled because the lungs do not act, and the infant dies in a few moments; whereas a well instructed nurse knows what to do in such a case, and the child's life is saved.

Out in China we hear of infanticide. We are grieved, we deplore it; but look nearer home. Christian women, wives

and mothers, question one another, how many infants prematurely born are baptized? How sad is this. You have had children you might surely have met in heaven; but through your gross, shall we not say your culpable ignorance, you will now never see them, if happily you arrive in heaven.

God expects us to use natural means; He breaks not His own laws, at least that setting aside of His laws which we call a miracle is not His ordinary mode of acting. What we could have known naturally, by the proper use of our understanding, He will not ordinarily make known to us supernaturally. Make up now for any neglect in the past, you who are already mothers; and you, dear girls, who are not yet so, thank God that you have now the opportunity of learning your duties before your ignorance has led you into such a grievous mishap as that of ruining both the bodies and the souls of the children entrusted to you by God. Learn now all that appertains to your future state, that you may not hereafter

have reason to reproach yourselves. Your Mother in heaven wants those fair flowers, those little rosebuds; and if God takes them in their infancy you know that if baptized you have them still in heaven. They will greet you there when you too arrive in that glad home. But this subject, the loss of children, it will be better to speak of in a separate conference. If any of you, already mothers, have to reproach yourselves with neglect in the past, make amends to Jesus, by spreading this knowledge amongst other women, by saving other souls from leaving this world unbaptized, and then our dear Lord will reward you by helping your endeavours to keep the children who are baptized from losing their baptismal innocence, or from dying with mortal sin upon their souls once washed pure and white in His Precious Blood.

CONFERENCE XIV.

MOTHERS MUST TEACH THEIR CHILDREN THE TRUTHS OF RELIGION; THE INSTRUCTION THEY RECEIVE AT SCHOOL IS NOT SUFFICIENT.

Some parents make a great mistake in thinking that if they send their children to a good school that is all that is required of them; that they are dispensed from any further trouble. Now, especially so far as regards religious instruction and knowledge of the faith, this is a mistake. We have already said that from earliest infancy the mother must commence to teach her children to know Jesus, and how much He loves them. Their first knowledge of God must come from the mother, this is evident; but, besides this, as they grow up many are the holy thoughts it is the duty of the mother to impart to them. As a rule children learn their religion at school in a mass, and it sometimes happens where there are a great many

to be taught, that here and there one or more do not learn what it is absolutely necessary for them to know. Some children are exceedingly dull and stupid, and some through carelessness and want of attention do not in the least take in what is being taught. Religious subjects are often very unattractive to a child's mind, and in public schools are often taught in an uninteresting manner, in a way not likely to attract a child's attention. It is often but a dry study for the poor little things. Now, as we have said elsewhere, religion should be taught to children by those they love, by their mothers; and they should be taught in a winning way; their minds, so easily influenced in their young days, should be influenced by those who have the greatest power to do so, influenced, impressed for good; and not only when very young, but afterwards, as they get older, parents should examine them on their knowledge in Christian doctrine. Though as they grow up it will not be so easy to influence them, or to illustrate the truths of religion by pretty

tales, and thus amuse them, as we can do when they are little, still a few words may be spoken which, coming from the lips of a good parent, will carry weight, and also by showing the special interest the parent feels in this branch of study will make the child esteem it more, and raise its value, and hinder its being considered unimportant, as the prevailing tone at the present time might induce the young to imagine.

A mother indeed should take an interest in all her children's studies, but most of all in their religious studies, and make them feel and understand that she does so, and induce them to take a laudable pride in their prayers, their knowledge of God, and of the Christian doctrine. She should urge those whose education is more advanced to extend their knowledge of religion in proportion. She should encourage them to the study of theology and the fathers, impressing upon them that this is the noblest of all studies, and an inexhaustible source of delight, and that the more they learn the more they will see

there is to learn, and the more they learn the more will their faith and hope, and consequently their love increase. But she must inculcate upon them the necessity of pursuing the study of religious truth with love and reverence, that they must study in a prayerful spirit, with great diffidence in their own judgment, and with great deference to the judgment and opinion of others.

But, dear girls, I am going beyond my province in dwelling at length upon this subject of the importance of the study of theology and the other higher studies. If you marry and rise in life, you will do your best to encourage your children to value their knowledge of God above all knowledge, you will teach them from their very infancy all you know of God, and strive to excite in their minds a desire to know more. As they grow in knowledge you will still keep up their interest, by enquiries, by shewing pleasure in listening to what they have learned, when they tell you something new, and giving them every encouragement in your power. Oh,

how great the work there is to be done for God in their homes by holy mothers. Angels may they be, and more than angels. O God, inspire women with a knowledge of this, that they may have a right understanding of their holy vocation. Pour forth Thy Spirit into the hearts of those who are now preparing to become mothers, and form them upon the model of the Maternal Heart of Mary.

Turn now, dear girls, your thoughts to God, and invoke from your hearts His Holy Spirit. Offer yourselves, consecrate yourselves entirely to His Holy service; beg of Him to make use of you as He wills, and pray daily that you may co-operate with His Will, saying as earnestly as possible, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word."

CONFERENCE XV.

HOW MARY'S MOTHER-HEART IS EMPLOYED IN HEAVEN.

Dear girls, it is necessary, in order to fulfil God's Holy Will, and to fashion our lives as God would have us do, according to the model He has given us, that we should always have that model in our minds. Now we know that the model for all mothers is the sweetest of all mothers, our Mother Mary. You know that when a painter or a sculptor takes some model, some beautiful picture or statue to copy, he puts it before him, and looks at his picture, his model picture, or his statue, his pattern, and constantly compares it with his own attempt to copy it. Now, dear girls, we must look at our model, our Mother Mary. We must look up to heaven and see our supremely blissful Mother, and watch her occupations. We cannot fathom the abyss of her happiness in the possession, the contemplation, of God. Eye hath

not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive this joy. Mary and her God! this is a thought that fills the minds of many holy souls with ecstatic delight; but I am not asking you now to strive to meditate upon such high things, but to endeavour and picture to your minds that holy Virgin, that sweet Mother, not in her own joy and happiness oblivious of us here, but constantly occupied about us her unworthy children on earth. If we did but think how she is striving, dear Mother that she is, to do all good things for us, how we should love her, and how we should strive to imitate her. She sees one of her children in some way needing help, and she calls one of her beloved angels, and bids him go and give the necessary assistance. This the angel does so quietly, so sweetly, that those thus relieved, from lack of faith in heavenly things and the communion of saints, and the love and power of Mary, have little thought that it was through the Queen of Heaven they were thus assisted, and our dear

Mother is often not at all thought of in the matter. Mary sees some of her children who wish to become the spouses of her Son, and how does she not plan and contrive until she brings about the desired end. Again, Mary sees one of her children desiring to be settled in life, and how wonderfully does this sweet heavenly Mother arrange to bring two souls together whom she sees are suited to make one another happy, even though they may be in different countries. But our dear Mother is often not allowed to do this; very often young girls are so anxious to provide for themselves that they will not allow their heavenly Mother to act; Mary cannot do what she would; young people are so anxious to have their own way that they get in God's way, and very often when they have settled themselves in their state of life without consulting the Will of God, and as might have been expected find themselves unhappy, they are tempted to reproach God for their unhappiness, when it is entirely owing to their self-will. Dear Mother, thou in thy

heavenly throne art arranging and planning for thy children's welfare, make them look to thee, that they may love and trust thee.

Dear girls, look up to your Mother, see her sweet face smiling upon you, see the loving eyes looking upon you, turn to her and entrust your whole selves to her care, she will help you, help so wonderfully if you will allow her.

Mothers, teach your children to know Jesus, dear Jesus, as He really is, not as we so often picture Him to ourselves, or as others wrongly picture Him to us, —severe. No, but as the Lord who so loved little children, the dear Jesus who took children in His arms and would not allow them to be sent from Him. Bring your children near to you, and, praying God's Holy Spirit to help you, enlighten their young minds that they may understand their God, teach them about the Man-God who so loves them, teach them about Jesus, the king of Kings; teach them *how they are loved*, that is the grand point. If children are taught this grand truth when young,

they will scarcely lose it after. It will follow them when unhappily in after life they are tempted and fall, it will help them to rise again, for they will not despair. They will trust to the love of Jesus, which they were taught when young by the lips of a loving mother. They could not doubt that love, taught them as it was so sweetly by one who loved them so tenderly, and whose love of them they could not doubt, for they had seen it in her eyes, they had felt it in her warm embrace, they knew it by the sound of her voice, and when they heard the one they so loved telling them how Jesus loved them, telling them that His love of them was far, far greater than her own, they could not doubt it, because that sweetest of all human beings to them, their mother, had told them, and therefore they fully believed it, it was deeply impressed upon them. And if in after years, as we have said, they unhappily fell, yet would they not be afraid or ashamed to run to the Lord Who, as they had been taught, loved them so truly, and Who would therefore,

they knew, love them in spite of their faults, as they knew their own mother, in times perhaps long past, had done. She would never cast them off, they knew it, they could not doubt it; no more can they doubt that Jesus will forgive them, that His mercy is inexhaustible, and that therefore no crime, however great, should keep them from returning to Him now that they feel ashamed of their guilt, and of the way they had behaved to the dear, loving Lord, Whom they had learnt about in their early years, and loved until their sins had made them lose their love for Him, so that they had sadly loved something more than Him, and had left Him. But they do not doubt, when they repent of their ingratitude, that He will forgive them.

This, dear mothers, is your part, this is your work, to make your children know Jesus, and to make them know how He loves them. Prepare them for the sad falls that will most likely come in after life, so that they may not, as so many do, from want of trust in God,

from wrongly thinking that when they do not love Him He does not love them, go from bad to worse, and so die in their sin, die reckless, die without having begged pardon of dear Jesus, because they did not know how He loves to pardon; because they did not trust that love which "many waters," many sins, cannot quench, that love which is stronger than death. Children can be taught to meditate, that is, they can be taught to think of Jesus, and this will grow into meditating on Jesus. You can picture Jesus to them; you can describe Him with the little children, and tell them how He took those children in His arms and pressed them close to His breast; then you can say: If one of these little ones, when it grew up, became wicked, would it not grieve dear Jesus? Would it not make Him shed tears? But if that little child, after it had grown up, and had forgotten and turned away from Jesus, thought of the day when Jesus took it in His arms and loved it, and was sorry for its ingratitude, and came back and knelt

before Jesus asking forgiveness, would not Jesus forgive it? Thus we can lead a child's mind to think, and, above all, give it the habit of reflection upon spiritual things. What a stronghold would not this habit be for after years. How much there is to be done, and how strangely supine are many mothers in this most important matter; they know not what they might do, or they would surely do it; it is want of thought. But you, dear girls, are being warned in time, you will have no excuse if you take not to heart and profit by these words spoken to you from love to you, and from love to the little ones, heavenly gifts, that may be given to you by our good Father in heaven. Think of this grand vocation, think what a great honour is bestowed upon you; to you will be entrusted children of God: in making you mothers God likens you to Himself. Will you spare any pains to be good mothers? or will you spoil these beautiful gifts? You will be responsible before God for them; you will have to stand one day before His

judgment seat, to give an account of how you have performed the high office entrusted to you. Pray now daily to the Maternal Heart of Mary, that your own may be fashioned upon it. She is the Mother of mothers; she loves all mothers with a special, anxious love; she watches them praying earnestly that they may perform their duties well, and thus do such great and noble work in God's Holy Church.

CONFERENCE XVI.

HOW TO INSTRUCT CHILDREN IN CATECHISM.

Great care is needed in this matter; the imaginations of children are so easily impressed, and their ideas are all of such a material kind, such as they derive simply from their senses, that unless those instructing them are very careful there is danger of very wrong notions being conveyed. Pictures, for instance, are exceedingly useful for teaching children the facts of Sacred

History, but they need careful explanation; children take them in a most matter of fact kind of way, taking it for granted that the event or the mystery occurred exactly in the way in which the picture represents it. With this proviso, the use of pictures is certainly a most excellent way of teaching children, but only so, we repeat, when accompanied with careful doctrinal explanation. The Holy Ghost, for instance, is rightly represented as a dove, and it is quite possible for a young child to go away with the idea that the Holy Ghost was a bird, unless the teacher is careful. Let it not be supposed that we are wishing to restrict the use of pictures, the good effect of which upon a child's mind is very great. That remarkable and saintly woman, Mother Margaret O'Hallahan, tells that she believes her constant sense of the watchfulness of God, her habit of living in His Presence, arose from a picture in a church, of "the Eye of God," which she was very fond of looking at, the Eye seeming to

be watching her in whatever part of the church she might be.

Very simple, plain language should be used in teaching children. Flowery expressions are quite out of place with them. I recollect, when a little child, hearing a priest preach about the creation. It was, I dare say, a very eloquent discourse, but it left a strange impression on my mind, especially when he said, "God said, 'Let there be light,' and a flood of light burst upon an astonished world." The language of Scripture: "Let there be light, and there was light," is beautifully simple, but the "flood of light bursting upon an astonished world" set my mind to work wondering how the world looked when it was astonished, birds, flowers, trees, &c., all astonished; not being aware of the fact that the light came before the animals, flowers, &c.

Great care should be taken to keep the children's minds interested; this, of course, applies to all studies, but as religious instruction, catechism, the knowledge of God, is the most important

lesson children have to learn, we are referring to that alone at the present time. Exemplify what you are telling them by action; if, for example, you are speaking about the star that led the magi, point with your hand to show how it went on and on and on, and while the children's eyes follow the motion of your hand their attention will be awakened, and their minds more readily understand what you are telling them. Or you may be speaking about St. Joseph being obliged to go to Bethlehem to have his name enrolled, and then you can describe the large book in which it was entered, with a number of such little imaginary details, picturing the event to them. In this way they will take it in, and remember it. Children's imaginations are as a rule lively enough, and it is rather by sensible images than by abstract truths or dry facts that we can hope to make them understand. You must try and teach children to make acts of love of God whilst you are instructing them. You can tell them, for instance, how the

people of Bethlehem refused to give room to our Blessed Lady, and then ask them, "Would not you have given up your beds to the Infant Jesus?" their hearts are readily touched, and a real act of love most pleasing to God is evoked. Be as simple and as natural as you can; try to keep their attention fixed by the use of gestures and outward signs whenever it is possible. Describe scenes in our Saviour's life as if actually taking place before their eyes. Speak to them especially of the Mother and the Babe, —a sight they are so familiar with,—our Blessed Lady with the Infant Jesus in her arms. Ask them if they would not have been glad if our Blessed Lady had let them hold the Divine Infant for her for a moment; then tell them that they are far happier still in receiving Him into their hearts in Holy Communion. You can hold out some little child's hand to show them how our Lady, as she took the hand of the Infant Jesus in hers, sorrowed in her heart when she thought of the nails that would one day pierce those tender Hands; then, taking

out a pin, hold it to the child's hand, and ask if it would like to be pricked right through the hand with it; well then, proceed to say, What must it have been for Jesus to have had sharp nails run, hammered through His Hands? and thus, in speaking of the crucifixion of our Lord, stretch out your hand and arm, lay it upon the wall or whatever you may be near, and then describe the nail being put against the hand, the pain it must have caused, and so on. Such a method of teaching will certainly make the children reflect.

We are but throwing out suggestions, examples which you must try to follow in your other instructions. Always bear this in mind, that children's minds as a rule are very active, they must be employed, and that they are not sufficiently so, is the reason why their thoughts wander away, and they do not pay attention to the lesson they are being taught. Talk to them about some little animal, and describe its habits, and they will be all attention. In like manner describe as well as you can whatever you

Children should get a dim idea of God Himself from your behaviour, and if numbers of children in the present day have little idea or knowledge of God, it is the fault of those who have charge of them; they could not learn about God from either their words or example; and if indeed they might have learnt from their words, they did not do so, for their words had no unction; speaking indeed as a matter of duty, but as if hardly realizing what they said, they rather repelled the young minds from God than drew them to Him. Many are indeed, it is sad to say, sickened at the name of God, from hearing those speak of Him who have Him not in their hearts. Watch that young sister with the group of little ones round her, as *she* speaks of the Good God Who made them, loves them, Who sends their treats, their "goodies," Who brought them to the sisters to be taken care of, and while she speaks they are drawn to God, they begin to learn about Him, to trust Him. They instinctively feel she is speaking truth,

speaking what she believes and acts upon.

To return, however, to the subject of correction, a child's mind is more affected by acts than by words, by some little punishment quietly given, and as soon as the fault is committed, little acts of penance that the child will remember, and will know is certain to follow if it does what it knows is wrong. It must also be rewarded when it does a good action, and thus will be impressed upon its mind the *fact* of rewards and punishments, that it is sure to be rewarded for what it does well, and punished for what it does ill. A child feels going without its sugar, being deprived of its supper, or having a supper of bread and water, or going to bed early; and a little thing also rewards a child, a little fruit or sweets, or some toy, or being allowed to stay up a little later than usual, and so on. Sometimes, when a child is sulky, or passionate, or obstinate, it is as well to direct it in such a way, as may turn its mind from the present uneasiness, and not to give it the

correction at the time, a correction which it nevertheless deserves. I have known a child sobbing and pouting at being refused something, cured quickly by being told to comb its hair; the little one, at first, was sobbing between each pull of the comb, then gradually thought less of its trouble, and thus calmed down and was able to take the correction, which if given at the time of its passion would have had no good effect. I much admire the parent I saw do this, but how seldom do we meet with this wise conduct on the part of a mother.

Then there is the threatened punishment which never comes. Oh, the troublesome children this kind of mother brings up. Listen to her as she chides her little tormentor: "Have done, sir, have done, sir; you naughty boy, I'll punish you if you do that again." Over and over again in the course of a few hours have I heard this whilst nursing a sick person, without its producing the slightest effect, the little man paid not the least attention, except, perhaps, for a minute or two, and then, knowing

from past experience that the promised punishment would never come, he would return again to the forbidden play. What trouble such children give when, through the death of the mother, they have to be brought up by others. What a length of time it takes to undo the ill effects, and to force upon the child's mind the truth that disobedience is certainly followed by punishment. How many poor spoilt children we meet everywhere, and how different they might have been with a little more trouble, with different treatment. What a wholesome effect a quiet punishment, given calmly, given some time after the offence has been committed, has upon the mind of a child. If for certain faults certain punishments were unfailingly to follow, how differently would children grow up. Practise this system of correction. Do not correct when angry, and do not from softness withhold correction when your anger has passed away. Let not the child have a loophole of escape. Let it know most surely that punishment will follow the offence. The mother who is firm upon

this point is a happy mother indeed. Her children will grow up children of God, instead of becoming children of God's enemy, as unfortunately the children of too many mothers are at the present day. The happy children of such happy, good mothers, are children of light, and not of darkness. Would that the world was full of such mothers; beautiful would the sight be in the eyes of God. Loved indeed would such mothers be by the good God, loved in this world by the Father and Creator of all, loved with a love they can never know until, in the next world, they stand before God, O so happily, saying, "Here am I, Oh God, with the children Thou gavest to me." Joyfully will they speak the words, so calmly, so contentedly, so peacefully; and unspeakably blissful will be their hearts, as God's voice is heard saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants," and their glad eyes, looking up, will meet the lovely eyes of their Lord, and they will enter for ever into His rest.

Ah, dear girls, dear children of our

hearts, is not this worth striving for? Is not this worth the putting on one side your own inclinations, and living for your children? Ah, take them to heaven; do not drag them to hell. Work for God here; well, well will you be rewarded hereafter, when your children will rise up and call you blessed; nay more, the Almighty God Himself will thus proclaim you. Some unhappy mothers have already been cursed by their own children in hell, been cursed also by God; would you be of their number? Ah no, surely no.

CONFERENCE XVIII.

THE MEANS OF MAKING ONE'S SELF A GOOD WOMAN, A GOOD MOTHER.

We have spoken of the necessity of valuing grace if we would save our souls, if we would perfect them, if we would become good women, good wives, good mothers. Neglect of grace is the reason, the one great reason, so many fail; it is,

as we have said before, the reason of the eternal damnation of the poor lost souls. We might almost positively say that every unfortunate soul that, departing this life in sin, meets the face of an angry God, and hears the last awful words that God will address to it;—that most beautiful Voice of God, the tones of which will linger in their ears through their miserable eternity of woe with piercing bitterness;—we might with almost certainty say that soul that enters hell, with the words sounding ever after in its ears, "Depart from *Me*," was lost through neglect of grace. Poor soul, poor wretched soul! these are the last words it will ever hear from God, and if it had been careful of grace, if it had been taught to value grace, how different would have been its fate.

Now the great grace, dear girls, I wish you now to consider, is devotion to the Mother of Divine Grace, our Blessed Lady. Be true children of Mary; she will teach you to be true children of God, and true mothers of God's children. Go to Mary simply,

go to her as very children even when you have children yourselves; speak to her confidently about all your wants, all your troubles, cares, and anxieties. Do not think she leaves you when you leave her. Do not think when you find you have fallen, or have failed in your promises, that she will fail in hers. Ah no, she has promised to take care of all who come to her. She has promised to protect her own. Give, then, yourselves entirely to her, with all that you have, and all that you ever will have, children that will be hereafter given to you, husband and home, and she will indeed show that a special grace is attached to that household thus entirely consecrated to God through His Holy Mother. Special marks of God's Providence will attend you, and you, knowing what you are, knowing how faithless you have been to God and grace, will marvel, and be led to be more faithful for the future, from motives of profound gratitude to the great and good God Who has shown such goodness to you and yours. Believe me, dear girls, you have no con-

ception how everything will prosper with you if you put it under the special patronage and protection of the Blessed Virgin; she will provide you with everything you require for your real welfare; she will find, like a good mother, a proper partner for you. She will cause him to love you; she will enable you to retain his love when obtained. She will make you a happy mother of many children. She will arrange for your home and household in a marvellous manner. She will, dear mother that she is, bless you with special benediction if you will but trust yourself to her care, cling to her closely, and love her as very dear children should love a dear mother. Now I want you to commence at once the devotion to her that I speak of, but I do not want you at once to make the consecration that I spoke of. No, I want you to prepare in course of time to make a consecration of all that you are and have, or that you ever will be, or will have, to our dear Immaculate Mother, when you fully understand what that consecration im-

plies, and you will be happy children indeed when allowed to make it. In the meantime, prepare for this consecration,—which will work so much for you when you have made it,—by a great trust in our Blessed Lady; it is that which pleases her, and you have all power to do as much as that. Many of you have been very negligent about your duties, and you doubt whether God or our Lady will care for you. Now is the time to trust. Now turn to our Lady, and tell her how you know that she is better than any earthly mother; and that as a good earthly mother would not cast off her child when she was doing wrong, but would only strive to induce it to do better, so she will not forsake you, or cease to love you because of your offences, but will stretch out her hand to help you to rise and to persevere in the path, the narrow straight way, that leads from this world to the better world above. Your very past sins make it, if possible, more needful for you to trust our Lady than if you had not sinned. Just

now, commence at once to try her power with her Divine Son, and you will be indeed astonished. You will know that it is nothing in yourself that has drawn her to treat you with such love; you will know it is simply her own great love and goodness that constrains her, and inclines her to show such favour to you; and because you have trusted to her love, she will show herself indeed a mother to you, and prove to you that you have not trusted her in vain. How much more could we not say about this matter? but it must be at another time. I will conclude now with asking you only to try her power in regard to some matter, either temporal or spiritual. Go to her statue; ask her fervently; come again and persevere with your prayer, and soon, very soon, you will have to come and kneel at her feet, thanking her for her goodness in hearing your unworthy prayer. Now sing together her Rosary at her altar for your special intentions, and let one intention be that she may place you in the state of life God has

intended you for from all eternity, and herself prepare you for it.

Go regularly to the Sacraments. When you have once fixed a time, whether it be once a month, or once a fortnight, or still better once a week, never forego this, or evil will invariably follow, not alone to yourself but to your whole family. You will be happy, a very happy wife and mother, if you keep regularly to the Sacraments. You will do untold good; but God will punish you for the least neglect. Dread neglecting the great grace of the Sacraments. Endeavour to get your husband to accompany you; if you neglect your duties he will do the same, and you will soon go step by step from the grace of God. Also, when you may have fallen into sin, do not remain in that state. You may be tempted, tried, and lose unfortunately the grace of God; but do not remain in that state, rise as soon as possible, make as soon as possible your act of contrition, but go as soon as possible to the beautiful Sacrament of Penance.

CONFERENCE XIX.

HOW THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD SHOULD RESEMBLE THE HOLY FAMILY OF NAZARETH, AND HOW PLEASING THIS IS TO GOD.

Do you ever think, dear girls, of the holy home of Nazareth? Do you ever picture to yourselves that poor little cottage, with its lovely inhabitants? Do you ever meditate on that sweet home? See the air of peace and purity which pervades it in the midst of its poverty; see the order and neatness; see the concord and harmony that reigns there. Angels are clustering around, filled with admiration and wonder. The angels have seen many wonderful things since their creation, but perhaps nothing more wonderful than that lowly habitation where the Word made Flesh is dwelling with such love and delight with the children of men. Let us beg of them to give us some little share in their feelings, that admiring we may learn to imitate

what we admire; for this is all perfection, to imitate the Incarnate One. Now do not think, dear girls, that you cannot do this. Do not think that it is only the religious who can imitate Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. It is a common mistake amongst you that this can only be done by monks and nuns. Neither our Blessed Lord, our Lady, or St. Joseph, were religious in this sense of the word, or lived in a convent or monastery. They lived a simple domestic life, which you in your degree can well imitate; and many a time has the sight of a holy household, with the father returning from his work wearied and worn, with the honest look, the patient expression which so many a good labourer has, reminded us of St. Joseph; and the young mother bending over her child, how often, I say, has this brought to our mind the Virgin-Mother, and the Child Divine. What a charming sight it is. We linger at such a fireside as this; we go away calm and contented; it has had a happy influence over us, and why? because we have been in a

holy place, a place where God reigns, and where angels love to abide. We cannot often see these holy, happy homes; would that we could. They are dear in the sight of God and man. But why should not every Christian home be such as I describe? Why should not each of you, dear girls, make such a home? God will enable you to do so if you do your part. God will send the fitting partner to you; He will provide the home, it may be, perhaps, a very humble one; and He will give you gifts from heaven, I mean immortal souls, whom He will confide to your care.

How sad it is that God should be so disappointed in His designs of love, so defrauded of His rights, so deprived of what He so earnestly desires,—Christian homes; and why should it be so, if mothers were only what mothers ought to be? The reigning spirit in most homes is the mother; the well-being of a house in a great measure, certainly not altogether but in a great measure, depends upon the mother. If she is good, then quietly, insensibly, as we have

said, like a guardian angel, the mother influences the house for good. Why should you not each, dear girls, be such guardian angels of your future homes? Why should you not each one be as angels of peace and blessing in your homes? It is in your power to be so, it rests with yourselves whether you are so or not. Look again upon the holy house of Nazareth, see the sun gleaming through the narrow windows, and playing over the curls of the Boy of Nazareth, lighting up the face of Mary as she stays her needle to look upon her Child, who is running to her with some flowers St. Joseph has gathered for Him. We see him, dear St. Joseph, in the back ground, as he ever loved to be. He too is resting from work for a moment to watch the two, and then a few tears start down his cheek, as his full heart overflows with thanksgiving and love to the Good God who has confided to him such treasures. Love for Jesus and Mary! St. Joseph, who has had it like thee? Love for the Eternal Father; who, save Jesus and Mary, has loved

Him as thou dost? Help us, dear St. Joseph, that our homes may be like thine; to thee thy Heavenly Father confided His greatest Treasures, and thou didst guard them so carefully. To us He confides His lesser treasures, teach us, help us, to guard them as thou didst thine. Guard our homes, so that they be Christian homes, homes like thy home at Nazareth. Mary Mother, bless thy children. Jesus, dwell with us in our homes and in our hearts.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I offer you my heart and soul.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul with you in peace.

CONFERENCE XX.

THAT A MOTHER MUST SUFFER.

"To the woman also He said: In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." *Gen.* iii. 16.

Yes, a mother must suffer. If you would be a true mother, if you would be a noble mother, you must suffer, you must make up your mind to suffer, prepare for it, pray for patience under it. Motherhood has its joys to counterbalance its pains, and the joys surpass the sorrows and sufferings. The wondrous joys of a good mother cannot be written. We can simply say they are joys from God, they are joys making creatures of earth resemble in a special way, faintly though it be, the God of heaven. The mother with her babe folded to her breast: whom does she resemble? To whom is she likened? What are her feelings? In some slight degree, I say, does she not resemble the Eternal Father, with the Son of His Love resting in unruffled repose in His

Bosom? Does not her joy shadow forth, faintly but truly, the joy of the Eternal Father in the possession of His Eternal Word? Again, the mother feeds her child with her own substance; is she not like to Jesus feeding His children with His own substance, the Blessed Sacrament? See that noble, heroic, unselfish woman, surrounded by good loving children, that mother is a happy being, she is a grand creation of God. God loves to look upon her and hers, and if she be a faithful and devout Christian mother, He will bestow the graces of His Holy Spirit upon her in rich abundance, the graces of charity, joy, peace, patience; she loves and is beloved. But moreover, she is likened to her "God made man" in suffering. Jesus is very mother-like, and a true mother is very like Jesus. See her in her "hour of anguish," the great drops upon her brow from extremity of pain, her face contracted and drawn, and as you stand by her and take the hand of the suffering mother in your own to comfort her, you can hardly help thinking

of Jesus in His Agony, as He brought us all forth in pain and anguish on the cross. The "hour," however, passeth, and the mother's pain is turned to joy. And then comes a fresh pain: her treasure, it seems, is to be taken from her, illness has attacked her child; and patiently the mother watches by the bedside of her little one; gently she tends it, unweariedly, regardless of herself, and she has it restored to her now more precious even than before.

Then comes the sickness that attacks in after years the soul of her child. Oh, the pain she then feels; then is the truly good mother's soul pierced with sorrow, as her child's soul becomes soiled and sin-stained. What must the mother do in this case? She must weep and pray, she must carefully watch her child's ways, she must, in few words, gently, but firmly, point out the evil and its consequences, she must not passionately scold, or wrangle, or argue. She must use few words with her child, but many words with God; she must not grow weary; she must "persevere in

prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus;" she must storm heaven; she must offer her life for her child, nay, she must live for it. Patiently she must bear with the erring one, thus imitating God, Who so patiently bears with us all. She must win him to God; and surely in time she will succeed, though it be at the cost of a broken heart;—and that child will be more grateful for its second birth than for its first. We write not of the sorrows of a mother in order to alarm you, to make you grow desponding. Far from it. It is to prepare you; it is that, being forewarned, you may be forearmed. A young, light-hearted girl, we suppose, marries: she has never had to endure sorrow, or, if she has, it was of a very slight evanescent kind, and when the sorrows incident to motherhood come upon her, she is quite unprepared for them. This is sad: it is greatly to be deplored, because very often she falls a prey to these sorrows, instead of bravely surmounting them, instead of making use of their purifying effects to lay in a

stock of virtue, to obtain grace for her husband and her children, to grow detached from the world, to become, in a word, a true woman, a holy wife, a devoted mother. Instead of this, she becomes a weak, pining, foolish, hysterical creature. She loses the respect of her husband and children; she grows selfish in her griefs, and not finding comfort in anything, feeling unhappy because of her want of submission to God's will, she not unfrequently takes to drink, and becomes a disgrace and a scandal to her family and to society at large.

Do, dear girls, prepare now if you would be good mothers,—and I am sure you do wish to be so,—do prepare for suffering; you will have great joys also, for it is thus God works. These two things, joy and suffering, generally go together. A mother has a peculiar joy unknown to others; and if a true mother she will patiently accept the suffering, and her joy will enable her to bear heroically the suffering God in His mercy and love will send her. Do try and make your present life a preparation

for what is to come in all probability. Accept your present light cares, and bear them patiently; do not talk much about them; offer them secretly to God, and thus you will be laying in a stock of patience. You will be preparing yourself to become those noble creations of Almighty God, good mothers. Think over again the work you do for God, by bringing into the world and bringing up good children; think again of the value of but one soul in God's sight; think again that Scripture tells us it is by child-bearing women will be saved, that is, by bringing children into the world and doing their duty by them. We know we cannot succeed in any ordinary matter of importance without taking pains. How, then, do we think to succeed in that grand matter of bringing up children for God, without trouble, without taking pains? See the way so many women bring up their children,—helter skelter, without method, without management, without thought, without care, at hap-hazard. Such children are not *brought up*, they are simply dragged

hither and thither according to the passing humour of the mother. If they do not go utterly wrong it is generally because some one has taken in hand the poor neglected ones, some good women, called by God for the purpose, who devote themselves to supplying the place of the bad, careless mothers of this world. What would otherwise become of so many poor unfortunate children, God alone knows. But the work which our sisters and other charitable persons do in this way is very hard, up-hill, as one may say, and often unsuccessful. It is very difficult to counteract the bad effects of home; try as they may they do not succeed with all, only with some. They may suffer, and do suffer for those children whose mothers will not suffer for them, but they only succeed in part in reclaiming them, whereas if a mother suffers for her child, if she takes pains in bringing it up well, though it may go astray for a time, it will, as a rule, most certainly come right again in time, if the mother only perseveres in her prayers and pains, though of course

there are exceptions to every rule. So then, dear girls, be prepared to suffer when you become mothers, and be prepared to suffer well. You will then really suffer less, for there is no suffering so great as that of those who do not perform the duties of the state God has placed them in; this is indeed the greatest of pains, there is no peace for such, no pleasure, it is all pain. But the pains of the good, of those who are performing well, (even with occasional failures,) the duties of their state, the pains of such, I say, have also peace, always bring peace along with them. They can be better borne than even the wearisome pleasures of the worldly woman; the self-sacrifice of the devoted mother is less painful then the ease of the selfish one.

Be assured then that the mother who suffers most, if she bears her sufferings well, suffers least in reality. The mother who is patient herself, brings into the world children who will be inclined to patience, for children are wonderfully influenced, even in a natural way, by

the dispositions of the mother. Believe me then, that a mother may have very many trials, sickness, losses, deaths even, more than other women, but if they bear them patiently, they are in reality less than those of others who may not have had such reverses, such cares and anxieties, but who in their smaller troubles were fretful and impatient, and who brought impatient children into the world. Such women, not being good, devoted mothers, would most likely hereafter have to endure the frightful curse of being mothers of bad children. This brings misery enough, such misery as makes many wretched mothers try to drown their sorrow in drink, and that breeds suffering of another and a far worse kind, the bitter anguish of being openly at war with God, in which state no one can be happy; the bitter pang of remorse, the misery of feeling themselves bound fast in the chains of sin, a habit of sin from which they seem as if they were utterly incapable of freeing themselves. That indeed is suffering, that indeed is pain

without alloy, bitter, bitter pain. God keep us from this state, God help us to save our own souls and the souls of those entrusted to us. God make you devoted mothers, mothers not in name only, but in deed and in truth.

CONFERENCE XXI.

MOTHERS SHOULD OFFER THEIR CHILDREN TO GOD; MAKE HIM A GIFT.—OFFER A BELOVED CHILD AS A VICTIM FOR SIN, FOR THE CHURCH.

I want this evening, dear girls, to give you a pretty thought. You love God, you think sometimes how good He has been to you, and the thought rises up within you, What can I do for Him? You do not feel called to the religious state, and yet you feel you want to do something, to give God something. Well, you may do much, very much. When you have children they will be very dear to you. Well,

make an offering to God of one or other of them, and then bring that infant up with special care. Think whilst you are carrying it, that it is to be for God, whether girl or boy; go often to Holy Communion, as I have told you before, for the oftener you receive the Sacraments, the greater grace will you get for your child; Jesus does not come to you without blessing your little unborn treasure within you. Have prepared before the birth a medal of our Lady and a small crucifix, to place upon your child as soon as it is born, to mark it specially as God's child. Have it baptized as soon as possible, that it may not be under the dominion of Satan, that it may not be kept from God longer than can be helped. Then bring it up most carefully. Let that special child of God have a special care, and you will see that God will give it special graces. What God will do with it we cannot say; it may become priest or nun, father of a family or a mother; or it may go to God early, it may be a bud for God's Kingdom in heaven, rather than a full blown

flower, but buds are beautiful to us, how much more so to God. Anyway, that child thus offered to God is a happy child, and the mother who thus generously offered her child, a happy mother. Would there were many going about the world marked out thus as God's own.

What a happy thought for you, dear girls, to think you will be able to give gifts to God, gifts more pleasing to Him than anything else you could offer. There is nothing of this world God so loves as He loves the human beings He has created. You may think God loves and is pleased with those who build a church to His honour, and you are right; but, dear girls, you may give God this joy, this pleasure, you may build Him living temples. Oh, will you not do this for Him, will you not cast aside yourselves and devote all your energies to this grand work of giving God living temples, giving Him gifts He will accept with delight? Think how often you see a holy priest devoting his whole life and energy to building a

church to God's honour. How hard he works to accomplish it; we have most of us watched, and helped in some little way, a priest who is striving for such a noble end. But, dear girls, look into yourselves, and resolve that as your mission in this world is not to build churches, but to give God living temples, that you will use every means in your power that you may give to God those living temples He so loves, and that they shall be as pleasing to Him as you can make them. You will spare no efforts, you will look upon yourself, not so much as a mother who brings children into this world for the world, for your husband, but as a mother who brings children into God's Church, who bears fruit for God, who is, if we may so express it, one of God's mothers, mothers after God's own Heart. Then how different will be the way in which you will regard your children and what you suffer for them; you will be an heroic mother, a noble woman, a martyr in God's sight. Do be this, do, I entreat you, daily implore every grace

you need, that you may be this most noble work of God, a true mother. Then will you not fear to meet Jesus when you leave this world. Then will He welcome the pure holy mother, who lived on earth but for Him and His, with a grand loving joy. Then will He draw her close to Himself, saying, "Come my blessed one," and you will enter into His rest and peace for ever. May this be so, Mary, Mother, pray. Children of Mary, turn to your Mother, asking her that it may be so, to her joy and yours, when she presses you close to her breast, and makes you forget for ever all you as a true mother have suffered.

CONFERENCE XXII.

A CHRISTIAN HOME A TRUE TEMPLE TO GOD.

What a lovely spot is a true Christian home: can we say enough in its praise? Eulogies are written in praise of many

places, holy convents, solemn monasteries, lonely retreats; let us eulogize Christian homes. Angels dwell in that home, therefore it is the home of angels; still more, Jesus dwells there. God is in that home in a special manner. Our dear Lord dwells in the hearts of those little ones; His Holy Spirit is with them, and with the parents too. Are they not performing a grand work; are not their lives, when led in conformity with the Will of God, most pleasing to Him; is not their union an image of the union of our Lord with His Church? Are they not the instruments God makes use of to create beautiful souls, and to people this world with those whom His love calls children of God? Are not parents fulfilling the Divine mandate that commanded the people of this world to increase and multiply?

Ah, we might do so much good if we raised a higher ideal in our minds of Christian homes, if we only understood what they might be, what they were meant to be, and resolved that they should be, if by any possibility it

lay in our power to make them so. Thank God, it always lies in the power of the parents to make their homes holy, and therefore happy. Without suffering and sorrow they cannot be; but we can sanctify this suffering. A Christian home can be both a Bethlehem and a Calvary. The births, the deaths, can all be sanctified, can give great glory to God. The sicknesses that may come, all, all can be made so holy, so pleasing to our good God. Dear girls, carry away this thought, think of it well, that it will depend principally upon you whether your homes are sanctuaries of God or not, I mean really holy spots that delight the Eye of God. The devil hates holy homes: he ruined the first, he destroyed the happiness of Adam and Eve our first parents; he will try to destroy yours. Be on your guard against him, let nothing defile that holy place where souls are created, where God's children are born, where they die. Use every effort in your power to let God's Spirit reign in your homes, and to keep out the evil spirit; he will come and

tempt and teaze, but bid him in the power of Jesus Christ begone, and use every effort not to allow him any footing in your home. He has regular nests in some families; indeed, instead of some homes being called God's homes, they might well be called the homes, the haunts of the devil, such power has he in them: and if he had been resisted bravely, strongly at the beginning, if natural means had been used together with supernatural, the foul demon might have been driven back covered with ignominy and shame. Many a wife could exorcise the evil spirit from her husband if she chose to use her power. God did not give women the influence they possess over men for nothing.

As we have so often said, the wife is to be a visible guardian angel to her husband; but her ministries must be as much as possible like the ministries of the angel, invisible. The wife "must render her husband good and not evil all the days of her life." She must use her tongue to good purpose: not for rating and scolding, &c., most unbe-

coming a wife and mother; but for giving good counsel, cheering, enlivening, and doing all in her power, which is very great, to make a happy home, to undo the work of the evil one, who made home life unhappy. To repair this calamity, and thus give God great glory, you must, dear girls, imitate often the Mother of Good Counsel; you must not rely on your own strength, or you could do none of these things; but you must seek strength from on High, you must look up to God, you must implore help from heaven; you must turn to your Mother Mary, the joyful Mother above all mothers, surrounded by her happy children. You, too, will be a happy mother, surrounded by happy children, if you persevere in your path of duty as a devoted wife and mother to the end.

CONFERENCE XXIII.

THE GOOD WOMAN OF THE GOSPEL.

The good woman! What a lovely word is that of woman! Would that we could add in all cases the word *good* woman. It is a homely phrase used by some old fashioned people, "good woman;" but see, dear girls, what Scripture calls a good woman. We read and ponder and picture to ourselves that good woman of the Scripture, so respected by her husband, so blessed and loved by her children, and we find the complement of her virtues, the greatest reason for her being praised, was in the fact that she feared her God. She was good to all, she worked, loved, laboured for all; but the beauty of her life, the reason why she is so extolled is, that she combined the two, the service of God's creatures with the service of God. Listen to the simple narration in Scripture of a good woman.

"Who shall find a valiant woman?

The price of her is as of things brought from afar off, and from the uttermost coasts. The heart of her husband trusteth in her, and he shall have no need of spoils. She will render him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She hath sought wool and flax, and hath wrought by the counsel of her hands. She is like the merchant's ship; she bringeth her bread from afar. And she hath risen in the night, and given prey to her household, and victuals to her maidens. She hath considered a field, and bought it: with the fruit of her hands she hath planted a vineyard. She hath girded her loins with strength, and hath strengthened her arm. She hath tasted and seen that her traffic is good: her lamp shall not be put out in the night. She hath put out her hand to strong things; and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle. She hath opened her hand to the needy, and stretched out her hands to the poor. She shall not fear for her house in the cold of snow, for all her domestics are clothed with double garments. She

hath made for herself clothing of tapestry: fine linen and purple is her covering. Her husband is honourable in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land. She made fine linen, and sold it; and delivered a girdle to the Chanaanite. Strength and beauty are her clothing; and she shall laugh in the latter day. She hath opened her mouth to wisdom, and the law of clemency is on her tongue. She hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle. Her children rose up, and called her blessed: her husband and he praised her. Many daughters have gathered together riches: thou hast surpassed them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; the woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her works praise her in the gates."

Ponder over these words, keep them in your mind; see how the good wife is praised for her industry and energy; see the stress laid on the fact that she looked well to the paths of her household, and ate not her bread in idle-

ness. This is what we are impressing upon you, dear girls, the necessity of learning all that will help you to perform your duties as wives and mothers, of looking well to the paths of your household, and not eating your bread idle; of uniting this with fear of God, which most certainly keeps us from offending Him, from breaking His laws. You will then, will you not, my children, strive to do all you can, that you too may be good women, good Christian women? You know that you should be better now than the good woman of old, who lived before the time of our Lord's coming. Some of those ancient Jewish women, however, would put to shame many Christian women of the present time. But you, dear girls, I know have resolved to be truly good, holy women. I do not mean women who say very long prayers, and are always in the church and on their knees, but I mean good, sensible, kind-hearted, industrious wives and mothers. I do not speak of the religious state to you, because I am specially bent upon your being good

mothers, and because the married state is the ordinary state ordained by God for the majority of human beings; the religious state is the extraordinary state, and those who feel themselves called to that, or rather are advised that God is calling them, will follow His call notwithstanding all they are hearing of the beauty and holiness of married life. Several of your companions have already entered the religious life, and are happy in it, thank God Who called them to it. If you are called you would obey His Voice, would you not? If He said "Come," you would not answer "No." As we have said before, all perfection consists in fulfilling the Will of God, and you will with difficulty be good women in a wrong state of life, and you can by God's grace easily be good women in the state God has called you to.

You know these days are very evil. You know that sin is rampant, outrageous; that sacrilegious invaders are seated in power and authority in God's holy city itself. Those who have done this terrible deed, (for many of whom

it would have been better if they had not been born,) could not have perpetrated it if all the Christian mothers had done their duty. We know there are exceptions, we know that some very holy mothers have had bad children, but taking a view of the whole world at the present time, we may say there could not be such a general plague of evil if parents did their duty by their children. Mothers, you have a grand mission in this world. Dear girls, you are a little band as yet, but do your work quietly and earnestly; induce other mothers to view their state as you have been taught to do, and teach them what you have been taught. Give good example, above all. You will do this unconsciously, unknown to yourselves, if you only act as Christian wives and mothers should. Bring up your little ones with love, with care, true children of the Church. Your memory, in after years, when your children are far from you, will keep them from vice. Right principles, instilled when they are young, will bear their fruit in

after years, and the mother who laboured to bring up her children well, *the good woman,* the kind loving mother, will be never forgotten, but will influence those whom she reared when she has gone to receive the reward of her labours, when she has heard God's sweet voice saying to her: "Well done, good and faithful servant." At that happy moment will she not be glad that she laboured so earnestly in the good Master's vineyard; that she did not spare herself; that she did not let her talent rust; that she fulfilled her work? Ah, what a blissful moment to be looked for, longed for, when the mother, from her home in heaven, will view her children on earth, and rejoice in their victories against God's enemies, rejoice that she brought them up well, that they will rejoin her in heaven. But what an awful thought is that of the mother who has not done her duty, and who, from her place of awful and eternal punishment, looks upon her children in the world, and sees their onward course to rejoin her in those everlasting

horrors. Ah, if Dives wished to warn the brethren he had left in the world, that they might not be punished as he was in the flames of hell, would not a mother, then, wish to warn her children, and would it not be part of her punishment, her agony, that she could not? And the meeting in hell of the sinful mother with her miserable, sinful offspring! Is it possible to think of it calmly; do we not shudder and turn away? We are told that the children will curse the parents that they ever brought them forth. Oh God, how awful! Think of it, weigh it all, and, dear girls, if you are not resolved to do all in your power to save the children you will bring into the world, do not marry. If you are not resolved to suffer, to labour, to bear all things for its sake, do not bring into the world a poor little creature, to risk its eternal happiness by a bad bringing up; neither by implanting in it—while you bear it within you and it is so capable of being influenced by you—your own bad passions, and thus preparing it to become an easy prey of the

devil; so that it might be said of it, it would have been better for that poor wretch if it had never been born.

Ah me, the word mother has something so lovely to our ears that we like not to connect it with such awful thoughts; a mother's office is so God-like, so divine. Children of Mary's Heart, be good women, be good mothers, and hereafter you will rest on God's Bosom; not alone, but those whom you brought forth with you.

CONFERENCE XXIV.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS ON CHILDREN'S DEATHS.*

Dear children, you whom we are striving to prepare to be good noble mothers, there is one thing that happens in the course of most mothers' lives, and that is, the death of one or more of their children. It will be a new epoch in your lives, a grief, a desolation, that

* See page 47.

none other but a mother can know, and that the nobler the nature, the more devoted and holy the mother, the more deeply will she feel. If it were possible for her own soul to die, the very essence of her being, and she still to live; would this express the intense feeling of loss? Ah no, it is not to be told; but, dear girls, some of you will feel it, and I will prepare you for it beforehand. I would urge you not to fail God in that moment of terrible suffering. I would implore you to bring down graces from heaven in showers upon your other children, by your patience and submission to the Will of God, when His hand is laid thus heavily upon you. You are our Lady's children, do her credit at that moment when you can so liken yourselves to that sweet sorrowing Mother. Though you can never know sorrow like to hers, yet in your degree you may please our good God by imitating the Mother of Sorrows. And dearly does Jesus love to see something on earth again resembling that Mother whom He placed on this earth as an example to all of us. And poor

mothers who lose their children have many comforts, if they would only look at it rightly, as well as sorrows. If a mother loses a baby child, she is heart-broken when she sees the little cold form before her, and thinks of its little life gone; it seems like a part of her own life gone. But still, let her look and think and be comforted. She has done her work. She has fulfilled a beautiful mission in this world. God made her a mother, He gave her a child to guide, and guard, and bring to Him in heaven. If it had lived it might have lost its soul; but it has died in its baptismal innocence. God has asked that mother for that child; it is better to give willingly to God what He asks of us, and then will come a great peace. Besides, that poor mother, she may be unknown to the world, she may be ignorant, uneducated; and yet what is she? She is the mother of one of those glorious souls in heaven; she is the mother of one of the blessed. And then that one of the family that has gone before, would it forget those of its family it left on

earth? Ah, no; in the beautiful life of St. Frances of Rome we see how the blessed in heaven love and guard those they have left upon earth. In many of the revelations of the saints is this made known to us; and it is a happy thought. And those mothers who have lost their children, in after years have they not reason to believe, if their children have died the death of the just, have they not their comfort, must they not be grateful, that those souls committed to their care have just finished their course, and been set free from the temptations of the world? Yes, there is comfort in these thoughts. A mother who has lost her child must feel, and should feel, that she has done an important work in the world, that she has done an important work for heaven. The patient, holy mother, is indeed to be admired in her sorrow. Angels admire her and respect her holy mission in the world; but she is to be envied not pitied. The angel-guardians love to bring their charges to God; but they are guardian angels to God's children, they are not their mothers.

The office of a guardian-angel in itself is not so great as the office of a mother; wherefore do not, dear girls, think it all sorrow if you lose some of the children God may give to you: give generously to God what He so generously gave to you. You were not worthy to be chosen to bring into the world a child of God. And yet He did choose you, He made you a mother; and yet sometimes, when God has made us mothers of His children in this world, and wishes to make us mothers of His children in the next, we rebel, we like not to place those in heaven who were only given us by God to bring up for heaven. Not that we say, dear girls, you can help grieving: this would not be natural. Jesus wept with a mother's love as He looked upon His dead child Lazarus, and those around said, "See how He loved him." So true mothers must weep: better for them to weep over the death of the body than over the spiritual death of the soul. God grant you may not have to do the latter. God grant that you may so bring up your children that

they may not ever lose their baptismal innocence, as many holy mothers have done. But on that point we must speak another evening, as I want to impress it very strongly on you, how, in a great measure, it will depend upon you to procure this happiness for your children, that they may retain the innocence given them when they were washed in Jesus' Blood in baptism. Now I must conclude by again repeating that God chastens those He loves. As you know, He loves you now, and will love you still more when you have fulfilled the mission for which He sent you into the world, by being mothers, and have even sent Him children to heaven. Certainly the angels regard your dignity: they have charge of God's children, but they are not their mothers; your office is higher than theirs. But if the dignity is so great, what is the responsibility attached to it? This we have often considered: we bring it up again in order that you may console yourselves under that great grief which comes to most mothers, to lose your children, that you

have fulfilled your mission when you have great reason to believe they have died good deaths, by giving them back to God who gave them to you.

CONFERENCE XXV.

BAPTISMAL INNOCENCE.

As I have before said to you, my dear girls, that there could be no comparison between the pains a painter or a sculptor takes to form a beautiful picture or statue, and the pains a mother should take to form a noble child of God; so now, recalling this to mind, think what a grand thing it would be if you could so bring up your children that they would never sully their baptismal innocence, that they would wear the white robe of innocence given them in baptism unsullied in this world, and carry it unspotted to God in the next. Oh, what a happy mother would that be, who would rear up one such child? May God grant that some of you may be

such happy mothers. The painter and sculptor will not be known in heaven for the paintings and statues that they made on earth; but the mother who has done her duty, the mother who has been a mother indeed in spirit and truth, she shall have praise; yes, praise, congratulation, not only from angels and saints, but from the lips of God Himself.

Ah, then, dear girls, sent into this world with such a noble mission, be true to your noble work, emulate one another in preparing for this grand state. Be preparing by every possible means, especially by patience; think, when occurrences happen to cross your will, that you will be patient in order that you may hereafter have patience under the various trials that must come to you, as they come to all who are called to do great works for God; that by being patient yourself you may have patient children, and thus children who may be saved from soiling their baptismal robes, for you know well what a fruitful source of sin is impatience.

Yes, dear girls, you will commence

this very night to prepare yourselves to be what you have every reason to believe God intends you to be, mothers, and mothers of saints. You hate sin, do you not? It is the work of the devil. He came and tempted our first mother, poor Eve; she hearkened to him, she fell, and brought into the world fallen children; but God's Wisdom knew how to frustrate the art of the devil. Our dear Mother Mary made her appearance in this world, to the discomfiture, the intense annoyance of the evil one. You, dear girls, are children of the Immaculate Mother: she will help you with your work, her work in this world; she will help you in the resolution you are making this evening, that if God in His goodness gives to your care His children, you will strive to keep them as He gives them to you the day of their baptism, unstained by mortal sin; you will strive that as Jesus' Blood has washed these souls to a glorious whiteness, you will be mothers, guardian angels, to them, to keep them thus, and think no pains, no trouble too great, to

guard from the tempter's snares, from the dangers of the world, the fruit of your womb, whom you would wish to be precious fruit to Jesus.

CONFERENCE XXVI.

A MOTHER MUST BE THOUGHTFUL, TIDY, AND ORDERLY.

Now another thing most necessary to be remembered, is that a mother must be thoughtful. Let the young girl, directly she is married, lay aside her thoughtless, careless ways. What was excusable before she has entered the married state, or more easily excused, cannot be excused after, and especially when she becomes a mother. So much depends on a mother's thought, that we cannot over-estimate the importance of every mother both praying and using every natural means in her power to acquire a habit of thought. A wife and a mother has to think for her husband and children. In many, perhaps most

cases, the wife has to exercise her mind more than the husband. He has to look to his business, but he has not always the multiplicity of things to attend to, to think of, that the mother of a large family has. She has often, too, to think of many things connected with her husband's business; but without this, what a multiplicity of matters has a mother to think of, and many of them of such grave import, the forgetfulness of which might seriously injure soul or body, or both, of her children. Now a habit of thought can be acquired, and bad memories can be made good, first and foremost by being convinced of the necessity, the importance, of being thoughtful, by desiring it ardently. This is the first step to acquiring it. Then if we do from our hearts desire to be thoughtful, we shall pray for it earnestly, and we shall, when we go to Holy Communion, where you know we may obtain all we wish from dear Jesus, ask Him to give us this gift, promising to use every natural means in our power also, and we shall soon see what a

change will take place in our memory. We must also have a great devotion and constant recourse to our guardian angel; wonderful is the assistance that good guardians will obtain for us. We shall often be reminded of things without any apparent reason, and shall often be helped by our heavenly companion in many matters, which we may know or may not know have come through him; so forget not, my dear girls, these various means of becoming thoughtful. First, by really desiring it; then, secondly, by praying for it; and thirdly, by using all natural means to obtain this good habit.

Again, I said you must be tidy; tidy in your own person, and tidy in your house. How displeasing it is to see a dirty, untidy woman; she cannot have self-respect: and again, to see that same woman dressed on another occasion beyond her station. Who does she dress for? Should it not be for her husband, first and foremost? Yes indeed, and therefore she should be as anxious to be as pleasing in appearance in the house

as out of it, nay, more anxious to be pleasing in the house than out of it. It is a woman's duty to please her husband, to be attractive to him, and those foolish women who, sometimes from a mistaken piety, as well as those from slovenliness, are negligent about their personal appearance, cannot be too sternly rebuked. Make it a point, dear girls, to be always clean and tidy. Be as attractive to your husbands as before you were married. His love for you should increase, not decrease, after marriage. You should ornament your house by your bright, cheerful appearance; and besides being tidy in your own appearance, you must be tidy and orderly in your house. Have a place for everything, and everything in its place. If you always keep to the one place, what time will you not save! Likewise it is a very good habit to label the places, and very many articles in constant use in the house; then when you are ill, and strangers are in the house, your whole place will not be upset, and yourself often taxed to know where this or the other thing is.

When you have a place for everything, be sure and put things in their place as soon as possible; avoid a habit of laying things down out of your hands anywhere. The loss of time, and the vexation of spirit, that arises from carelessness on this point is immense. At the same time it is no good for a tidy wife to be always fidgetting an untidy husband; she must try and put up with it, and bear it patiently, and perhaps in course of time he may, to please his wife, be more careful; but however untidy a man may be himself, he nevertheless likes his wife to be tidy, and will have little respect for her if she is not so.

Again, in all these matters I must ask you often to think of the great example to all mothers, the Virgin-Mother of Nazareth. See her going about her little poor home; see the order of the house, that house that angels visited, and which is now the favoured place of pilgrimage of all Christendom. How our Lady respected God's presence everywhere. How we may imagine when she

had cleaned a room, she would put a few flowers in it. How impossible it would be for us to imagine our Lady careless or untidy, or that in the holy house of Nazareth things were thrown about or left in a disorderly manner. All was clean and simple, and so may your homes be also, dear girls, if you wish, and most pleasing in the sight of God. Your house will also be visited by angels, nay, be the residence of angels. You will have pure little souls given you to take care of for God; you will have their guardian angels with you. You must respect as well as love your heavenly gifts, those little innocents whom God will entrust you with, and command you to bring up innocent. Ah, you have a beautiful life to lead, a grand work to do for God, if you will work it with a will. And keep clear of Satan's snares, for he will strive to upset your home, he will strive to cause discord, for he knows how God loves good, holy, Christian homes, he knows well how he succeeded in ruining the first home of Adam and Eve in para-

dise; but this we will talk about another time. We will finish by thinking whether we are thoughtful, tidy, and clean, and orderly in our ways. If not, dear girls, whom my heart loves, as I have watched most of you entering God's holy Church, and have rejoiced over the great graces vouchsafed you, I beg you to try and make a return to God for the light of faith He has given to so many, to resolve to be good, holy women, to try and do your duties so that none may be neglected, and that your lives may be pleasing to God, by every act being offered to Him, and done for His honour and glory. And this cannot be if they are done in an untidy, disorderly way, or if you are yourselves, by your slatternliness and slovenliness, showing plainly that you are not living in God's presence. Go now and sing your favourite hymn to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and think what promises you will make Him regarding your future life, and how you will begin to practise at once those little acts that are necessary to acquire a habit of any virtue. Enter

into particulars with yourselves; ask your guardian angel to help you in your self-examination on all the parts of your life, that you may see where you are thoughtless, which often is another name for selfish; where you are untidy, or disorderly; and then, turning to our Lady whilst you sing "Mother Mary, at thine altar," ask her, like the dear Mother she is, to help you. Spare no pains to be what her loving heart so desires you should be, good women, noble mothers, doing a work in this world of wondrous power, by bringing into and preserving pure in it a generation of children of God, who have learnt from good mothers to live for Him alone. God bless you all, and may none of you disappoint that good God Who is watching your every step with such loving solicitude. Be ever true to Him, your first Lover.

CONFERENCE XXVII.

GOD'S FIRST FAMILY, AND FIRST HOME.

Dear girls, we were talking last time, amongst other things, upon the first family of God on earth, the first home. I did not like to stay speaking about it then; it would need plenty of time, and we ought not to hurry through that beautiful subject, our first parents Adam and Eve, but to strive and get a glimpse of the life God intended them to lead. Can you imagine those two first created creatures, so pure, so holy, so entirely free from sin, that having no temptations within themselves, it was difficult to try them, and God had to put some apparently insignificant command, such as not eating a certain fruit, to try their obedience? Ah, look upon those two immaculate ones, so innocent, so holy, so happy, so upright, so pure, so entirely divested of aught that is mean, selfish, little. Ah, what grand natures had our first parents! What loving hearts! How

devoted were they to each other! We imagine Adam roving through the beautiful garden of paradise, plucking the flowers to present to Eve, making garlands to place on her beautiful hair. How like two happy guileless children they strolled by rippling fountains and through beautiful meadows, plucking delicious fruits, enjoying the beauties as, alas, we can never enjoy them now, for sin has damped the primeval happiness, the enjoyment bestowed on our first parents by the good God Who made us to be happy, Who destined us for a glorious eternity, and intended that our life on earth should be a preparation as well as a foretaste of that happiness.

Have a picture in your minds, dear girls, of that lovely home in Eden. See that first couple created by God; view them seated under some lovely tree, basking with overflowing delight in the life God has given them; around them play animals whom Adam has named, and who come at his call, quite tamely and without fear, and lie at his feet, whilst Eve strokes them and plays with

them, and majestic lions lay at her feet, as in later times they have done by miracle to some of the saints, the young St. Agnes for instance. We think how wonderful was this as we picture the young fair virgin, the Roman maiden Agnes, with the lions at her feet; but to our first mother Eve, magnificent, gigantic animals come at her call, she strokes them, they are pleased at her notice, they feed from her hand; Adam watches the fair one God has given him, with a pure, holy love, for his love is from God, ordained by God to sanctify the married state He has Himself formed and blessed. How happy they are, that first family of God; how pure, how holy, how innocent their happiness! Oh why was it all changed? How was it? Ah, it was the envy, the jealousy of God's enemy. He looked upon paradise, that fair garden of delights, he saw the two beautiful beings God had created: he was mad with jealousy and hate. Why were they created? Was it to fill the places he and the rebel angels had lost by their sin? What,

should creatures of flesh and blood fill the grand places in heaven of pure spirits, grand intelligences, such as he and the fallen angels had been? So he resolved to tempt them. Ah, dear girls, how easily we are tempted and fall; how weak is our nature. Beware of temptation, guard against it in yourself and those dear to you; but of this we shall speak another time. We wish you now to look upon that fair home of Eden before the temptation, before the fall, and then to resolve, that as you can see how pleasing to God is a holy home, how He delights in it, so you will resolve to make a holy home for Him to look upon, you will give your good God what He wants: you will try and make up as well as you can for the craft of Satan, for his deceit with Adam and Eve; indeed he succeeded with them, but let him not succeed with you too. Be wiser, learn by their sad experience, and make up to God, repair to Him. Resolve that when you marry, it shall be for God's glory as well as your own good and happiness; that therefore

your first thought shall be to choose a holy partner, a good man; that then you will spare no pains to fit yourself for your work, to learn all you can, to get all the grace, that is, all the help you can from God, to be a good wife and mother, and thus to make a holy, happy home, that God will delight to look upon.

Oh, what a grand work! Dear girls, do do your best to multiply such homes in God's sight. You know not what blessings from God you may draw upon this world by helping to fill it with holy homes; thus you will defeat the devil, thus you will in some measure repair the mischief he caused when he spoilt the first home, the first family of God. It was a foul deed; you see the terrible effects that have followed from it. Be warned by it, and resolve that you will have no hand in this work of the devil, but that you will strive that your home, when God places you in one of your own, shall be a home after God's own Heart, if efforts of yours can make it so. But you must take the ordinary prudent measures to ensure its being so,

and the first undoubtedly is in the choice of your partner for life; the second, your preparation for your state, your appreciating its greatness, and suitably preparing for it, using all natural means possible to fit yourself for it; and then continuing perseveringly, despite all obstacles, in making your home a loved dwelling-place of angels, a home specially blessed by God, where a divine Sacrament is consummated, where a wondrous work for God is performed, where children of God are reared and brought up as children of God should be brought up, where care is taken that everything evil is excluded. What a blessed sacred spot of earth is such a home! What a pleasing sight to God! What a heaven on earth! What a new paradise! Oh, what a pity if, through the wiles of Satan, or your own carelessness, this should be spoilt, all this beauty in God's sight blasted, and that your house should be a place where Satan has found a home. Oh, what a pity! Let not this be; it must not be. Say from your hearts it shall not be. By God's grace it shall

not be. Look for an instant again upon that fair picture, the home of paradise. View the Ever Blessed Trinity delighting in that house, and its fair inhabitants Adam and Eve; think of the joy, the complacency of God as He saw that His work was good, and grieving over the ruin that followed, the bright beauteous world that was blighted by sin, the sad havoc that was caused, the change that took place; resolve that as our dear Lord has given, will ever give grace to repair all the sad past, you will seek and take that grace to make your home a paradise on earth, to fit yourself for the grand office of mother, to fulfil the grand mission God has given you, to be a noble woman, wife, and mother. This do I pray for you, dear girls; this do I hope for you; for this do I entreat heaven.

Jesus, grant me my prayer.

Mother Mary, take them under your special protection, provide them with suitable partners, help them to make holy, happy homes, thy own and St. Philip's Girls.

A LETTER TO ST. PHILIP'S GIRLS.*

Dear girls, all this long way off I am thinking and praying for you, fearing you are not attending your meetings as you used, not learning useful things to make you become good wives and mothers; because it is not sufficient to be good, we should try and be useful too. You should wish to have the respect of your husband and children: and how can this be if you are stupid, inert, awkward, and not capable of doing those things which your office of wife and mother obliges you to? I must pray you not to leave off your attendance at the meetings, either public or private, and not to be touchy, and because you cannot have the sister you want, to stay away from what would be of such service to you in after times; so I trust I shall hear you are all assembled as usual, when next letter comes from England. I have just said, however

* Written at Rome.

good you may be, you will not have the respect of your husband and children if you are not useful also. How strange it is that we seem not to be able to have a happy medium: we meet some women, capital housewives, clean, orderly, with good business qualities, but they are all wrapped up in their houses, neglecting their religious duties; and other women we see frequenting the churches to the shameful neglect of their home duties. Now this is wrong: why can we not combine the two? It is such a disgrace to religion to let it be thought that those who are good think more of their prayers than their duties; and yet this is thought by many in the world. I know a gentleman who had been so sickened with a pious girl whom he had for a servant, and who, though very fond of praying, was not so fond of scrubbing and cleaning, and getting the meals ready punctually, that when engaging a fresh servant he jestingly remarked he should make the enquiry: "Are you fond of praying?" "Oh yes." "Well then, you won't do for us."

Well, dear girls, you laugh at this. Perhaps it is hardly applicable to you, for when I left you certainly were not greatly addicted to prayer; but one or two of you might fall into this error, so these few words will not be out of place; and they will equally apply to such of you as are fond of frequenting singing meetings, &c., when you have duties at home; or such of you as may be charitably inclined and go visiting sick people, a very good work indeed, but not if you neglect any home duty, "Charity begins at home." It is not many months since I heard of the sudden death of a man, whose wife was first and foremost at every sick bed round about, staying days and nights; now this looked good, but it was not really so. The woman's first duty was to her sickly husband, getting him every comfort she could, saving him all possible worry with the children, &c., and making his life as comfortable as his delicate state would allow her. May the sad end teach her better. Poor woman, she fainted with fright. How much happier for her if

she had the thought to look back upon, that all that could be done to prolong his days she had done.

This is one thing you will have to consider carefully, what to do in sickness. You will not be married long before God will visit you with this mark of His love, which enables us to show our love for Him; but how helpless you will feel if you know not what to do for those who are sick, so I have advised you to learn from the sisters, who are so glad to teach you all useful things, how to cook, how to make your clothes, how to manage your homes, &c. I advise you also not to think it unnecessary or dry study when you are asked to learn a little nursing, you will be so grateful hereafter, when perhaps some dear little child God has given you is lying prostrate in pain, and you know not what to do for it, and you then recollect some simple remedy which relieves a great deal. There are some useful books it would be well to read, but they will not help you as much as listening to those who have had much

experience, and can explain to you better than any book can. Now, I expect to hear a good account of you from the sister who has charge of you, and that when I come home you will all be so clever that I shall not know you. You will be baking loaves and sending some for me to taste, sending in cough mixtures, cutting out and making with your own hands little things to be given away at Christmas in honour of the Infant Jesus. Perhaps some of you will be in homes of your own that I shall come and see, and if they are kept in good order be able to give some little ornaments from Italy as a reward, and to encourage you to always keep them nice. You are very favoured in comparison with the poor here in Rome, you can have a nice little house to yourselves: but it is not so here; even people not poor cannot have a house to themselves unless they are very wealthy. I tell them about the nice little homes in England, the little houses some have so clean and nice, that one can really work in them and think of the poor

little house of Nazareth. You are really favoured, for you can have a whole house to yourselves, and have it clean inside and out, stairs and all; but here if one person likes a clean place, the other people in the house may be dirty, and so the house will have a dirty appearance, whatever pains some of them may take. Now good bye, dear girls, you shall hear more from me soon, and I may tell you some of the ways abroad, which I dare say would seem to you very funny, for instance, washing the clothes with ashes, &c., which, however, is a great saving of soap. Now this has been rather a wandering sort of chat I have had with you, but think over the points I have wished to impress upon you.

First; Punctuality at the meetings.

Secondly; Desire of knowing all that is useful, and practical efforts to learn all that is useful, cooking, nursing, &c.

Thirdly; Never to neglect your home duties in order to go to church; or to employ yourselves in prayer.

We came into the world to do God's

holy, adorable Will. God loves all things orderly, does all things in order, and wishes us to do the same. A slovenly, slatternly, disorderly woman will never come up to God's idea of a wife and mother, and you, dear girls, I am sure want to do God's Will. He has brought many of you into His Church by a great stretch of His mercy. Now, show Him you are grateful, by your efforts to live good simple lives, to be true, pure, industrious women; and, if the good God wills it, still more, Christian wives and mothers. And this means much: wives and mothers are plentiful, but Christian wives and mothers are not so plentiful; they are more rare. Now God bless you. Let us be united in prayer for one another; and write to me whenever you wish.

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